

WACCI

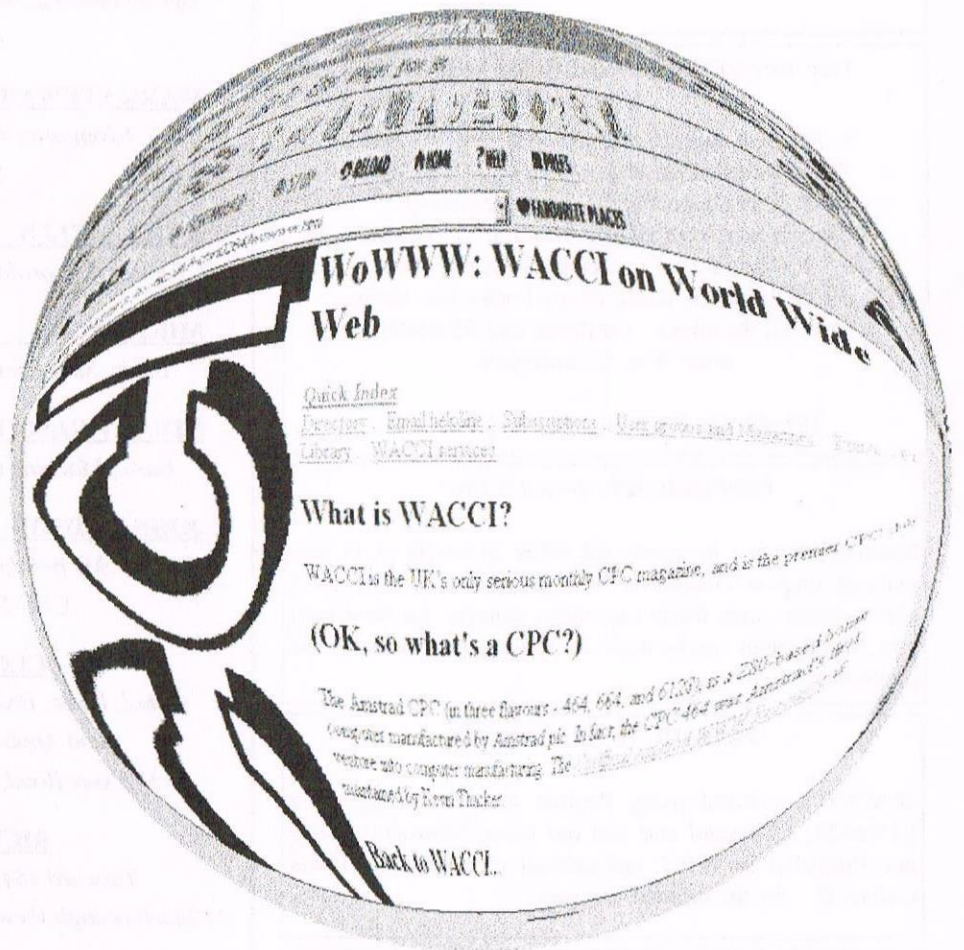
**THE WORLDS BEST CPC MAGAZINE
AND PREMIER CPC CLUB**

ISSUE 112

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MAY

1997



**WACCI ON THE
WORLD WIDE WEB**

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THE BENEFITS OF WACCI MEMBERSHIP

- * The best magazine for the serious CPC user.
- * An Index of the above from issue 1 to 104.
 - * Telephone Helpline (indispensable).
- * Bargain buys/wanted lists from the Market Stall.
 - * Discount off goods from advertisers.
- * List of PD discs, tapes, library books and services.
- * Above all the advice, assistance and friendship from other WACCI members.

Benefit List By Ernie (Wishlist) Ruddick

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WACCI: The club for Amstrad CPC computer owners.

FRONT COVER: by Paul Dwerryhouse.

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WACCI

Edited By: *John Bowley*
Owned By: *The Club Members*
Chairman: *Doug Webb*

Conceived and Founded
By: *Jeff Walker*
In: *October 1986*

Developed and Expanded by:
Steve Williams
Clive Bellaby
Paul Dwerryhouse
Philip DiRichleau

Copy Date: *16 May 1997*



Hello everyone, its me, Paul Dwerryhouse, back again in the famous pages of Thanks and Stuff once more. But only for one issue. You might have already spotted the changes up above so I'd better get on and tell you the news...

THE NEWS

I'm afraid we had a double whammy in the club this month, personnel issues and membership levels. Let's look at the personnel side first. Philip resigned as Editor due to personal reasons. We all thank you Philip for the splendid work you did as Editor and we are all pleased that you are staying on as Fair Comment Editor.

That means, of course, that Richard Fairhurst has also decided to step down, so we thank you Richard for your brief stay helping the magazine out. I don't think it will be the last we shall hear of Richard - good luck with whatever you are doing mate.

John Bowley (*fool*) has taken on the job as Editor, assisted by Ron Izett. Doug Webb will take over JB's job as Chairman. I'm staying right where I am at the pennies and stampy end of the club. I am only here as temporary Editor to give JB some breathing space. Three weeks to produce your first issue is a nightmare. I know because I've

been there. John has seven weeks to get up to speed, so lets wish him luck.

One final thing, lets make sure that John and Ron have plenty to do, so get those articles rolling in.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

First lets give you a table of figures so that you might understand what been going on. Here are the last 12 months:

April 1996	351
May 1996	339
June 1996	334
July 1996	327
August 1996	325
September 1996	315
October 1996	308
November 1996	309
December 1996	289
January 1997	297
February 1997	286
March 1997	247

A steady decline with an alarming drop at the end. Something clearly

had to be done. But what. Well, we actually had thought of this day and the one thing that a falling membership won't cater for is printing the magazine in the fashion we do now.

We would have to drop down to photocopying with maybe a staple in the top corner, clearly losing the style and class of the magazine. In fact, would it really be the WACCI mag?

At this point enter stage left Brian Watson with a sack full of ideas and a bag full of enthusiasm. Brian will be the new Publicity Office for the club. Thank you Brian for helping out. Membership has risen to 251, so we are regaining the position somewhat. So if you heard a rumor that WACCI is closing - forget it. We intend to stay here as long as you want a CPC club.

You will, no doubt, be told of the progress being made by John next month and I'm confident that the news will be good news.

AND FINALLY...

Sorry to have done this issue on a PC but with the time available to me it was the quickest solution for me. Well it was good to back as your Editor again - *Never say never again - Paul!*

COMPETITION SPOT

Hello again everyone and welcome back to your fabulous competition spot. As you will have noticed there have been a few changes to your WACCI and one of them is that I have become the official competition page setter. I was almost doing it all anyway but still relied on good 'ol John to set the page for me. Maybe sometime I'll get him to show me how to do that for myself but until then I'll stick with him - bless his socks. (phew, what's that pong!!)

ISSUE 107 - GUBBYS POSER

As promised here is one example of the answer to Harry Gubbys poser. There were lots of different options but the one I have chosen was sent in by Martin Bela who won himself a prize.

Chosen number 9:

- 10 print 9/9
- 20 print (9+9)/9
- 30 print (9+9+9)/9
- 40 print (9+9+9+9)/9
- 50 print (9+9+9+9+9)/9
- 60 print (9+9+9+9+9+9)/9
- 70 print (9+9+9+9+9+9+9)/9
- 80 print (9+9+9+9+9+9+9+9)/9
- 90 print 9
- 100 print (9+9+9+9+9+9+9+9)/9
- 110 print (9+9+9+9+9+9+9+9+9)/9
- 120 print (9+9+9+9+9+9+9+9+9)/9
- 130 print (9+9+9+9+9+9+9+9+9)/9
- 140 print (9+9+9+9+9)/9
- 150 print (9+9+9+9)/9
- 160 print (9+9+9)/9
- 170 print 9/9
- 180 print 9-9

I hope this will help anyone out there who couldn't make head nor tail of what to do. I know I didn't! Anyway Thank You Martin and Harry.

ISSUE 108 - PAULS POSER

The answers to this competition were: Little Arrows was sung by Leapy Lee and Joseph-Nicephore Niepce produced the worlds first photographic image.

And the winners were:

Peter Curgenvan and Frank Smart. Vouchers are on their way lads. Thanks for all your entries and please keep 'em coming.

ISSUE 109

As you may remember there was no competition in this issue as I was trying to catch up with all the answers and winners of past issues.

ISSUE 110 ANSWERS

QUIZ 1 - DON'T BE AFRAID

1. Confined Spaces
2. Lightning
3. Foreigners Carol.
4. Books
5. Water
6. Work
7. Fire
8. Number 13
9. Spiders
10. Marriage

QUIZ 2 - THINKING CAPS ON

1. Omega
2. Richard Baker
3. Sculptor
4. It has no tail
5. King Camp Gillette
6. Nitrogen & Oxygen
7. Seaweed
8. Four
9. Jess
10. Frans Hals
11. Brazil
12. California

The questions and answers for this quiz were taken from Michael Barrymores Strike it Lucky Quizbook.

QUIZ 3 - HALLS OF FAME

1. Rainbow
2. Egg
3. Yolk folk
4. Tortoise
5. Goblins
6. Golden
7. Prince
8. Hawk
9. Galactic
10. Seymour
11. Brothers
12. Bubble
13. Addams
14. Chase
15. Monsters

This quiz earned David Hall a prize for setting the questions. The winners of Issue 110 competition spot are:

- * 1st Pat Whitmarsh*
- * 2nd Christine Raisin *
- * 3rd Frank Smart *

Well done to you all. Your vouchers are on their way.

APRILS ISSUE 111

Did you spot the April Fools gags? I wasn't taken in by anything. Mind you that's only because I'm not computer minded and wouldn't understand the joke when it's right under my nose!

ISSUE 112 - BACKTRACK

All questions refer to April Issue 111.

1. Who experienced ROMbobulations?
2. What did Speedlock Associates say it would take to copy their 6K protection?
3. What is the number printed on the copy mod chip in John Reillys diagram?
4. What will you find on PD disc 60?

Easy peasy lemon squeezy eh! Answers by the end of the month. Ta. Vouchers valued at £10, £8 and £6 for the winners. These can be used at any time for WACCI goods and services but NOT for payment of subscriptions.

Seezya next month. Carol

FAIR COMMENT



PHILIP "TIGER" DIRICHLEAU & FRANK NEATHERWAY
3 GLEBE CLOSE, RAYLEIGH, ESSEX SS6 9HL

Well guess who it is here, yep me. I appear to be doing it all this month. This will give Philip a decent break from editing duties. I might be able to answer the odd question but I hope Philip will pick up on the ones I can't next month. So on with FC -Paul.

WHAT'S GOING ON THEN?

Hello Richard, it's me again. Most of you lot out there will have no doubt read the front page of WACCI and probably know now that the WACCI club and mag is coming to the end of its very long life. I know that most of you will be surprised and shocked at the news. But I also know that it is NOT the time to panic. There will still be WACCI, the public domain library. With contributions from some closed and some open libraries (Sheepsoft, Sleep-walker PD and such like) WACCI will literally become the BIGGEST Public Domain library in Europe and also an occasional newsletter will be published. John Bowley talked to me about Philip maybe turning WACCI into a disczine so there is still hope. At the time I am writing this letter (Sunday 30th March) I have found out from Philip about the closure of WACCI so you could say I was one of the first people in the know about it.

I am shocked about it. But, I have realised (during the evening) that there is really no need to be that upset about it. Of course you will be upset but if you think about the other ways that WACCI and its members are going to benefit from this you will soon see that this may be for the best! WACCI will be

centred on BTL - in other words most of its advertising will be done through that disczine which is an action that I can commend Philip for. Also the fact that he is going to take over the running of the WACCI PD library shows that he's not going to give up without a fight! Who knows maybe one day WACCI will have enough funds to start up the magazine again and the club as well? I have been a member of WACCI for 2 years now. Without it I would be SO technically incompetent. That was my present state before I came into contact with WACCI. The friendly nature of the club appealed to me and has helped me to come to grips with the intricacies of the Amstrad CPC admirably.

Of course there are a few people I have to commend for their wisdom and kindness; always helpful ever patient. Paul Dwerryhouse for putting up with my untimely phone calls, Philip DiRichleau for his patience in dealing with my inquiries; he never once complained about my questioning and he shall remain an eternal friend of mine.

Most importantly of all John and Carol Bowley. Without the constant reassurance off John I probably wouldn't be writing now and as for

Carol thanks for listening to me complaining about my GCSEs. So come on guys it could be worse; look on the bright side of life!

Adieu

Sajad Hussain

PS. If anyone wants to be penpals or just wants to talk CPC:-
111 Ralph Road, Saltley, Alum Rock
Birmingham B8 1NA

<<Dear Sajad, thanks for the letter and as you can see, we are in better shape than originally thought. So what is the story behind this letter. Simple. It was me sounding the alarm bells.

You will have seen the table of membership figures and know why I sounded those bells. WACCI life is comfortable with around the 300 members mark but changes would need to put into place as membership approaches 225. We were preparing for these changes. The only thing that you can predict from that table is that numbers were going down. But let's not get too carried away here. WACCI closing, that was never our intention. Sure, if the magazine changed format, could we call it a magazine in the proud tradition of the club magazine. No, we felt that a club newsletter would be a better description.

If numbers continued to fall

then the amount of work carried out by the various members that help the club so efficiently, would fall as well. Hence the idea of a smaller numbers running the club. If membership collapsed so low, then maybe only one person would be needed. But we haven't got there yet.

Philip, John and myself decided to let the news of the clubs troubles become public domain as soon as possible. This caused a great debate within the club and so many very good ideas have come out of that debate. I throw that debate open to all. Let us know what your feeling are and, indeed, what should be done to get numbers back up again.

I'm not too sure I discussed WACCI becoming centred on BTL with anybody. It seems that open debate throws up things that are not much to some members liking but I urge members not to believe any rumors that they may here. We shall be open and frank about the situation as it develops and keep you informed through the pages of WACCI.

So, let's try and get life back to normal as quickly as we can after these changes and problems. On my part I have advertised the club on the Internet and reponses are coming in at the rate of about one a day. Brian Watson is putting together a mailing shot for Comsoft and WACCI flyers will go out with that mail shot. Fingers crossed the responses are good. -Paul>>

SCANNERS CAN BE FUN

Dear Richard, Philip & the gang. In reply to Anthony Taylor's letter I have used on occasion the Dart scanner. The scanner itself fits onto the print head of the DMP2000 printer, this is connected

to the interface housed in a small box which plugs onto the expansion port of the CPC 6128. On the top of the interface is the brightness control pot. With the printer switched off and the scanner head fitted, gently push the printer head to the leftmost position and fit the switch vane. This is a small piece of plastic which attaches to the printer base with a sticky pad and must be set correctly so that the switch vane enters into the slot in the scanner head; this is used to inform the software when a line has been scanned in. After this has been set up the computer and printer can be switched on and the software loaded.

After loading a menu appears at the top of the screen. Place the original to be copied in the printer with the top under the scanner head and press the S key to select scanning. You can choose the scan area either one screen of approx. 8" by 5" or two screens which increase the scan area to approx 8" by 10". You can enlarge the scanning by altering the magnification but this reduces the scan size. As the picture is being scanned you may have to adjust the brightness control to get a clear copy, if the original is just two tone then the reproduction will be good but if the picture is say from a newspaper then you will have to adjust the brightness as the picture is being scanned to get the best result.

After scanning the image can be saved to disc and printed out. Some editing functions are provided but since the scanned image is saved as a normal Amsdos screen (you can display it with LOAD "filename.bin",&C000 from BASIC) convert it using Microdesign Plus and make use of the better editing facilities. Also the screen can be loaded into Advanced Art Studio if

you wish to add colour.

On the whole the Dart scanner is a worthwhile piece of equipment, coupled with the better editing facilities of Microdesign\Advanced Art Studio you can produce some good quality images. Yours sincerely,

Martin Beddall
Wombourn

P.S. 1. The WACCI magazine looks different (read much better) with PowerPage Professional, I'm looking forward for its release.

P.S. 2. Can you still get the WACCI binders and if so from whom & how much?

Thanks for a wonderful mag (creep creep!).

<<Dear Martin, thanks for the information regarding the Dart Scanner, it gives a very clear and concise overview of the scanner. I have a small (105mm wide scanning width) scanner attached to my PC and it gets well used.

The results of PowerPage Professional (apparently it runs on an Apple Mac as well) did produce an interesting magazine. This month sees the turn of a PC to knock out the magazine. Some food for thought for John eh!

WACCI binders are now available at the price of £3.99 and can be ordered from John Bowley. For those who haven't taken up this wonderful offer don't know what they are missing. The binders are red with WACCI in gold lettering and look good on your bookshelf.

You may creep as much as you like, compliments do help those members that toil hard for the club and I, for one, appreciate them. -Paul>>

TIMES ARE CHANGING

Dear WACCI, It's about time I wrote to you wonderful people at WACCI HQ again. It's been a long time. WACCI is still an excellent read and I really look forward to it dropping through the letter box each month. Which brings me onto the point of this letter. Is it time for WACCI to become bi-monthly? (Stands back out of the line of fire!!!). I seem to be reading between the lines just how much effort is put into producing the magazine on a monthly basis, and sometimes a hint of frustration seems to appear, what with ever looming deadlines and the chasing up of articles etc.

You guys and gals have your own lives to lead as well haven't you? None of the members want to see you burn out. Talking of burn out, have I fueled a discussion here? Let's see what other members think. Finally, a techy question for Richard, can I run an Amstrad MP3 TV Tuner with the original 464 colour monitor (CTM640) or do I have to have a 6128 monitor (CTM644)?

Best wishes

Colin Hazell

<<Aye-up Colin, you seem to written at just the right time. I hope we get loads of debate on this. I for one would like the magazine kept monthly but with a break for the Editor once or twice a year. Perhaps we should have a holiday Editor - any offers?

Sorry I can't answer your question but I'm sure somebody will tell us. A more technical bod (Philip) will be back next month to sort matters like this out. -Paul>>

DRIVE YOU CRAZY

Dear Richard, Many thanks for the instructions for converting a PC 3.5" drive to Amstrad usage. I've no doubt

that under normal circumstances this would work perfectly, BUT unfortunately, having searched the interior of MY drive, even with a large magnifying glass, I have to conclude that I seem to have something different. I understood my drive to be a bog-standard model, designed to plug in with no problems, but as far as I can see, the PCB is as smooth and unblemished as a baby's wotsit and there ain't no jumper leads or solder pads nor yet anything labeled DC or RY on either side of the two PCBs. There are a multitude of Rs and likewise Cs in profusion, but nothing that remotely looks as if it could be changed, not least by a fumble-fisted fellow like me!

The device appears to be made by CITIZEN, Japan; it also says "TUV Product service" with an odd logo carrying the legend "Bauart Geproft" (? it's very small); a number, OSDA-20E-U; and a couple of trademarks which I can't reproduce here, but one looks like SA in a part circle. So, what do I do now? (Apart from buying a new drive, that is!) I suspect running away would be a viable option.

Ron Izett

Ponterwyd

<<Hello there Ron. First of all thanks for continuing to support the Editor in formatting articles. You did a splendid job for me and I know John will find you a life saver.

I know for a fact that you have a new disc drive from Angela Cook because I only spoke to you a few days back.

With regard to your none working 3.5" drive, have you tried a hammer? -Paul>>

INTERESTING?

Dear Richard, How strange!, "P.C. in our time". Some couple of months ago I wrote to WACCI to inquire whether they produced a Mag within the Club on PCs or whether they could recommend one. I have not read an answer to this query, which I presume is understandable. I do not know whether I should write this letter, anyway, here goes. "Yes I have now got a P.C.", out of the blue this came as a complete surprise as a present from one of the grandchildren: I thought this rather wonderful also. There was also the dreaded thought that I now had to learn, master or whatever the technics of the P.C. world: after the wonderful world of my faithful reliable Amstrad 6128 I did truly dread the thought of going over to the P.C. This to a point has now been accomplished, yes I am into the P.C. Windows world, at this moment of time, to a very limited standard. I have received what I believe to be very sound advice, "use it for just what you need it for". You will find that you will be adding other works and much further interests to your computer learning without thinking about them. If this sounds incomprehensible, so be it, but it appears to be happening.

If you have continued to read this preamble to this point I should perhaps give an explanation, the reason of the letter, in this month's WACCI 111, "PCs in our time". The two opinions put forward have reason for debate. Angie has made some very good points, it is without doubt time to reflect on the CPC, and the continued life thereof. I think it is certain the life span of the CPC is fast shortening and the Club should really be preparing for this change. I agree it will take a considerable time as yet for

this to come about but there is nothing so sure. The "WACCI" club has built up a good following: is it not possible to include, for a start, two or three pages with PC talk, information, and or questions? Yes, one would have to ensure this did not take over the whole of the Magazine for the foreseeable future, but I am confident the Team of hardworking "WACCI" presenters would keep a very strict watch on this point; but at the same time be ready and prepared for the change when the time is ripe. I do take the points that Jack has put forward, and yes, those who have gone over to PCs are going to support Angie's view. I still think, the old Scout motto "Be Prepared" would be a good line to adopt at this stage.

Well there is one opinion, I am sure there are many more to follow but unless they are discussed, put forward, written about, shared or whatever, the presenters of WACCI will, I am sure and with respect, be out on a limb. I await with apprehension a certain amount of fear as to what opposition this letter will be received with, but it may at least be the result of the business being discussed for the good of the club. "Wait for it".

Sincere thanks for past help: I send off my cheque to Paul at Hawarden this coming week for further 5 months subscriptions of WACCI, even though I have committed the unforgivable.

Tom Litherland
Gwynedd

<<Hi Tom, gosh you are as naughty me with all this talk of PCs and Windows. Well, one of your ideas interested me.

Should the club members that use PCs produce a magazine/newsletter to air their problems, share knowledge etc. In this way the content of WACCI

would remain mostly CPC and only those that want to read PC/Windows related article could do so.

If there was enough support within the club then I would be prepared to be involved to get the thing moving. One point, of course, no WACCI funds would have to go into this. It must be funded separately by those members joining "PC WACCI".

Well what do you think. If you are a PC owner and would welcome support then let me know (post, the electric telephone or the WEB) and I'll compile a list of names to see if enough of us exist. One wonders just how many WACCI members are not with us now because nothing existed in WACCI to satisfy their needs.

Well those are my (very new) thoughts on PCs and WACCI. Over to you PC lot once more. -Paul>>

EMU TIME FOLKS

Dear Friends, Firstly - thanks to all who keep WACCI going - I enjoy hearing it come through the letter-box and it gets better from then on, especially now that I have learned how to open the envelope and read the contents. I started membership around issue 40 and these magazines are among the most frequently consulted in my bookcase. The Index is a very useful thing indeed.

With that in mind - cheque enclosed for renewal of subscription - can you pass it on please? This is for issue 111 and onwards. << Done, Frank. >> Question. Has anyone done a review of PD Disc 113 - the emulator ?I have bought a copy and loaded it into the PC but I still do not understand it well enough to make it

work with programs from the Amstrad that I already have, and saving those programs via the PC . . . Biggest difficulty is transferring programs over from 3" Amstrad disks via 3.5" Amstrad format to 3.5" PC format. Can it make the PC able to read AMSDOS format 3.5" disks? I have not been able to do so yet. HELP PLEASE?

The reason for asking is that even when my 6128 finally dies I'd like to be able to use all the progs that I have bought/borrowed/written for Arnold - though I suppose that I would have to transfer them all to 3.5" discs . . . This would free my stock of 3" discs which I would then be happy to donate to the club.

Next question - These progs that I have here - If I listed them out would anyone be interested in having the originals for the Library? (Or is that breaking the Copyright Law?) Next - I have a pile of 'AA's and a few 'Computing with the Amstrad' - any use to the Library or to anyone else? There is also a load of AA cover-tapes if they are of interest.

Someone mentioned Multiface 2 in the last WACCI. I bought a copy of the 'Insider' program from Romantic Robot: never used it as it's a bit beyond me. So if the club would like it I'll send it along.

Any licensed Radio Amateurs or SWLs in the Club? If so, 73s de G4CZA. Lastly - a plug for MiniOffice. I actually like this suite of progs. I am treasurer of a Winemakers Club and have kept the accounts on the MO Spreadsheet for the last 5 years with no problems. Membership details are on the Database (with the permission of the members to comply with the Data Protection Act), and the Balance Sheet is typed on the word processor. I have a spare instruction

book so if anyone needs it I'll pass it on via yourselves.

Sorry this letter is not on disc but I have yet to find out how to change discs in 'Word for Windows'. The PC is not nearly as good as Arnold in that respect --- Au revoir.

K.J.Newman (aka G4CZA)
St Albans

<<Dear KJ, Glad you keep on liking your club and I'm pleased you are now able to open the envelope. Tricky little things aren't they.

Quite a bit has been written on these emulators and Nic Raynor did an article on how to get it all up and running. Check the Index to locate the article (sorry I'm a bit pushed for time to research it now but it was twelve to eighteen months ago if my memory serves me well (which it doesn't usually) it should help work wonders for you.

If you send your list of software to John Bowley then I'm sure John would be happy to place them in the Software Library. It also includes magazines so list them as well - taeverso.

To make MS Word documents available for Protex to read, instead of saving as a Word document, use Save As and MS DOS text with Layout. It works fine for me. Make sure the MS DOS disc is a 720K but you know that. Doscop can them be used on the CPC to copy to AMSDOS format discs. Golly Gosh, that's more PC tips in WACCI -Paul>>

AND FINALLY...

I would like to thank all those members that offered help during the last month. I'm sure that with such commitment to the club around, WACCI has a very long life yet.

Take care all -Paul.

CLUB EMAIL

From: keithwjones@enterprise.net (Keith W Jones)
To: DWERRYPF@AOL.COM

Paul,

I was a member of WACCI for a long time, you have already published my sale list once and as you can see it has gone down considerably. I still have the following left if anyone is interested.

Regards

Keith

CPC SALE LIST

HARDWARE

CPC 6128 computer with colour monitor	£65
Joystick	£3
Light Pen	£12

SOFTWARE

Cbasic Compiler -Digital Research	£8
MAP Ledger - PCW Integrated Accounts	£8
CPC/PCW ScratchPad Plus - Caxton	£5
20 Games on tape	£6
Electronic Music Utility - Discovery	£5
Various games on disc, each	£2
Maxidos & Procopy - Microstyle	£5
Bonzo Blitz - Nemesis	£5
Bonzo Super Meddler & Hack Pack	£5

MAGAZINES

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PROGRAMMERS' PATCH

By Matthew and Stephen Phillips

Since this article was written in Lent, we are offering more frugal fare in the form of a meagre ration of machine code and an unusually short introduction. The headings are from articles in this month's guest publication, RISC User magazine.

RADIAL PALETTES

Although there have been many articles about BASIC over the years, and a few about machine code, there have been hardly any about how to use the two together. The advantage of BASIC is that it is easy to write and debug, and there is no need to worry about how and where your variables are stored. Machine code wins on speed and better use of memory. There are also many things that cannot be done with BASIC alone.

```
100 MEMORY &8FFF:a=&9000:FOR
x=0 TO10:READ a$:POKE a+x,
VAL("&"+a$):NEXT
110 PRINT"Enter number (1 to 255)";
: INPUT x
120 CALL &9000,x:PRINT
130 GOTO 110
190 DATA DD,46,00,3E,40,CD,5A ,
BB,10,FB,C9

DD 46 00 LD B,(IX+0)
3E 40 LD A,"@"
CD 5A BB loop: CALL BB5A
10 FB DJNZ loop
C9 RET
```

Figure 2

BASIC and machine code together can be a very powerful combination. If the speed-critical parts of a program are converted into machine code and the

rest left as BASIC, you can end up with almost as good a result as if the whole lot were written in machine code, but with much less hassle.

This month we will take a quick look at the essentials of how to get BASIC and machine code to work together, then next time we will see how this applies to our disc menu.

TURNING THE WORLD GREY

Some pieces of machine code stand happily on their own, such as using CALL &BB4E to reset parts of the screen. Often though we need BASIC and machine code to communicate. For example you might want a BASIC variable to affect what the machine code does. The obvious way to do this would be to POKE the value of the variable into a memory location, and then the machine code could read that location and act on the information.

Figure 2 gives a better method. The BASIC program pokes in the machine code in line 190. The lower box lists the machine code in assembly language, so that you can see what it does.

The program asks for a number from the user, x, and then prints that many "@" characters. When the machine code is called, using CALL &9000, the value of x is simply tagged on the end after a comma. Before

passing control to the machine code, BASIC arranges these parameters into a block in memory, and loads the IX register with the address of this block. The A register is set up to indicate how many parameters there are. If we did the following:

```
CALL &9000,6,4,&CDEF
```

then when the machine code started, the A register would be equal to 3, to tell us the number of parameters passed, and IX would point to a list of the parameters. There are two bytes for each parameter, and the last one in the CALL command comes first in the list! In this example it would look like this:

```
(IX+0)EF(IX+1)CD
(IX+2)04(IX+3)00
(IX+4)06(IX+5)00
```

Have a look at the machine code in Figure 2. The number x will be stored at (IX+0), as it is the last parameter in the list. If it were bigger than 255 then part of the number would be at (IX+1) as well, but we have ignored this case. The number is loaded into the B register, and then a loop is executed to print the "@" characters.

CHANGING THE LIGHT

Suppose we want to return a value to BASIC from the machine code? Again, the obvious way would be to store the value in a particular memory location which could then be PEEKed by BASIC.

Figure 2.7 gives a more flexible

method. The machine code is called with `CALL &9000,@c%`. `c%` is an integer variable. The "@" in front means that instead of passing the value of `c%`, we are passing the address in memory at which it is stored. The idea is that if we alter the contents of this address, we can alter the value of `c%`.

Try the following commands in BASIC:

```
c%=5
PRINT @c%
PRINT PEEK(@c%)
```

As `@c%` is the address at which `c%` is stored, `PEEK(@c%)` is the value of `c%`. Now try:

```
POKE @c%,7
PRINT c%
```

and as if by magic, `c%` has changed! The program in figure 2.7 uses this technique. The variable's address is loaded into HL, and then the firmware call to read a character from the screen is used. The value returned in A is then saved in the BASIC variable before going back to BASIC.

Note that the variable whose address we pass must already exist. That is why line 120 sets `c%` to zero before calling the machine code.

A DOODLE TRANSFORMED

Actually, that isn't quite the whole story, as after saving A in the address pointed to by HL, the machine code goes on to put zero in the next byte of memory. This is because of the way integer variables are stored.

The basic unit of storage is a byte, which can hold a number from 0 to 255. If we want to store bigger numbers we need more bytes. A good analogy is to look at the familiar decimal numbers. A single digit can express the numbers 0-9, ten different numbers in all. To

express bigger numbers we use another digit, giving us ten times as many numbers again: the hundred different numbers from 0 to 99. We write the "tens" before the "units". The "tens" are termed "more significant" than the units because they help us to express bigger numbers.

```
100 MEMORY &8FFF: a=&9000:
FOR x=0 TO 13: READ a$:POKE
a+x,VAL("&"+a$):NEXT
110 MODE 2:PRINT"Bunnymen"
120 c%=0:LOCATE 1,1:CALL
&9000,@c%
130 PRINT:PRINT"The letter at the
top left of the screen is a ,CHR$(c%)
190 DATA DD,66,01,DD,6E,00,
CD,60,BB,77,23,36,00,C9

DD 66 01 LD H,(IX+1)
DD 6E 00 LD L,(IX+0)
CD 60 BB CALL BB60
77 LD (HL),A
23 INC HL
36 00 LD (HL),0
C9 RET
```

Figure 2.7

In the same way using two bytes enables us to store 65536 (= 256*256) numbers from 0 to 65535. The more significant byte, which allows us to store numbers bigger than 255, is placed after the first byte in memory, unlike the way we write decimal numbers, where the more significant digits come first.

Amstrads put the most significant byte after the least significant byte because that is how the Z80 processor controlling our computers prefers it. This method is called "Little Endian" arrangement, to be contrasted with "Big Endian", as used by the Apple Macintosh, among others, and not to

be confused with anything to do with boiled eggs. For numbers smaller than 256, the second byte will always be zero, so as we are returning a value between 0 and 255, we need to set the second byte to zero just to make sure we overwrite any previous value. For example, if we had done

```
c%=2000:CALL &9000,@c%
```

then we would get back some very funny results if we didn't zero that second byte.

The reason we keep using integer variables is that variables without the percentage sign (real variables), are stored in a more complicated way using five bytes rather than two, so it makes it much easier just to stick to integers.

FEATURES MUCH MISSED

Integer variables themselves are not really quite as simple as we just made out, as instead of using the two bytes to store numbers from 0 to 65535, they store numbers from -32768 to 32767.

You will very rarely need to know exactly how they are stored. If you are passing a value to machine code, BASIC looks after the storing of the value in the buffer. When returning a value from machine code to BASIC, if it is a single byte value held in an 8-bit register we just use the same technique as Figure 2.7. If the value was held in a 16bit register pair such as DE or HL, then usually we will get the right results just by plonking it straight back into the two bytes of the integer variable.

For example, the firmware call `&BBC6` sets DE and HL to the x and y position of the graphics cursor, either of which could be negative. To return the x co-ordinate to a BASIC integer variable, we would simply put

the contents of the E register into the first byte, and the contents of D into the second. The negative numbers will look after themselves.

SMALL BUT INDISPENSABLE

String variables are stored in a very different way from integers. If you have a string variable a\$, then @a\$ gives us the address of the string descriptor block for a\$. The string descriptor block is three bytes long, and the first byte is the length of a\$. Try it out:

```
a$="Hello"
PRINT PEEK(@a$)
```

The next two bytes give us the address at which the actual characters in the string are stored. The following commands put this address into the variable addr, and then print out the characters in the string:

```
length=PEEK(@a$)
addr=PEEK(@a$+1)+256*PEEK(@a$
+2)
FOR z=0 TO length-1:PRINT
CHR$(PEEK(addr+z));:NEXT
```

It is basically a very slow way of doing PRINT a\$. Figure 2.71 puts this knowledge into practice with another little example to read a character off the screen.

```
100 MEMORY
&8FFF:a=&9000:FOR x=0 TO
14:READ a$:POKE
a+x,VAL("&"+a$):NEXT
110 MODE 2:PRINT"Silly string"
120 a$=" ":LOCATE 1,1:CALL
&9000,@a$
130 PRINT:PRINT"The letter at the
top left of the screen is ";a$
190 DATA DD,66,01,DD,6E,00,23,
5E,23,56,CD,60,BB,12,C9

DD 66 01 LD H,(IX+1)
DD 6E 00 LD L,(IX+0)
23 INC HL
5E LD E,(HL)
23 INC HL
56 LD D,(HL)
CD 60 BB CALL BB60
12 LD (DE),A
C9 RET
```

Figure 2.71

There is quite a bit more to string handling than you might think. After you have run the above program, list it again, and have a close look at line 120. An interesting effect, isn't it?

Next month we will run over the main points of how to handle BASIC strings in machine code, and go over the machine code for our disc menu.

In the meantime, have fun playing around with some of the examples, and see what else you can come up with.

Matthew and Stephen



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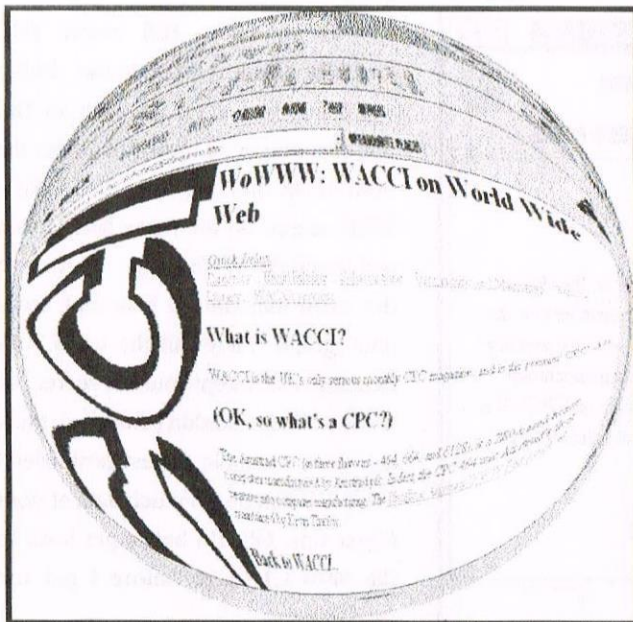
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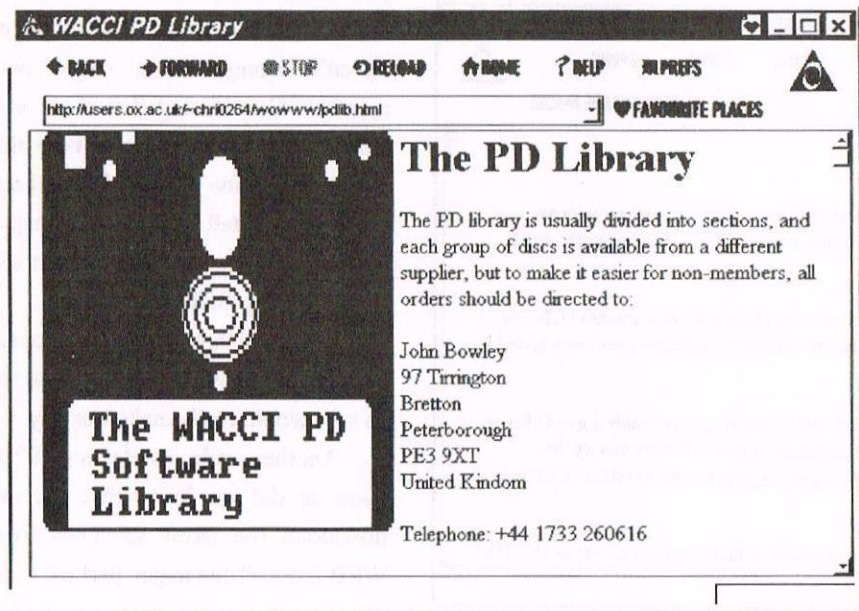
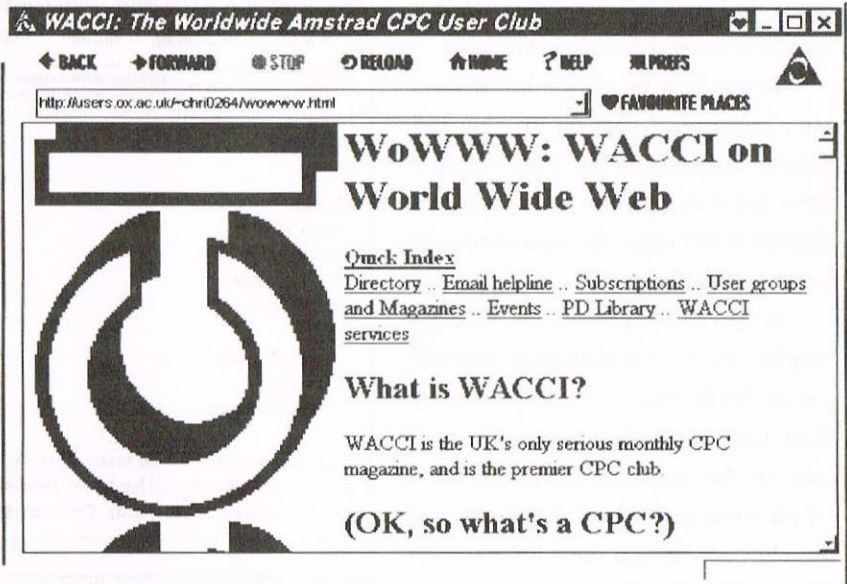
**WEB
pages
by:
Matthew
Phillips**

**Article
by
Paul
Dwerryhouse**

Well I thought this was to be my only contribution to this month's magazine - just shows you what thought did. It only thought it did. This is not meant to be a PC related Internet article but simply to show you what Matthew has done for the club. We should all thank him for this contribution of his to the club. Off we go...

INTRO

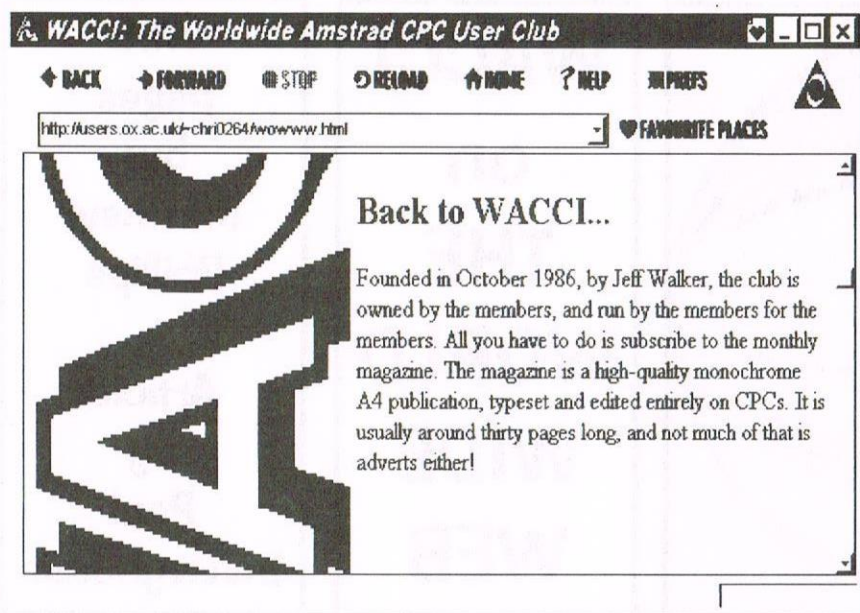
I've only been on the WEB for about one month now but, as you can imagine, the very first search I did was



for WACCI. It was so easy to find but then how many organisations in the world are called WACCI? I think we are unique.

So what you get when you have called the WACCI address is its home page. From here you can select various other pages. When I say a page I should say that it can be just a screen or something you can scroll down for ever.

The WACCI home page is shown above. It needs scrolling to see it all so I've just grabbed the top of the page, or a screen full, to show you. The

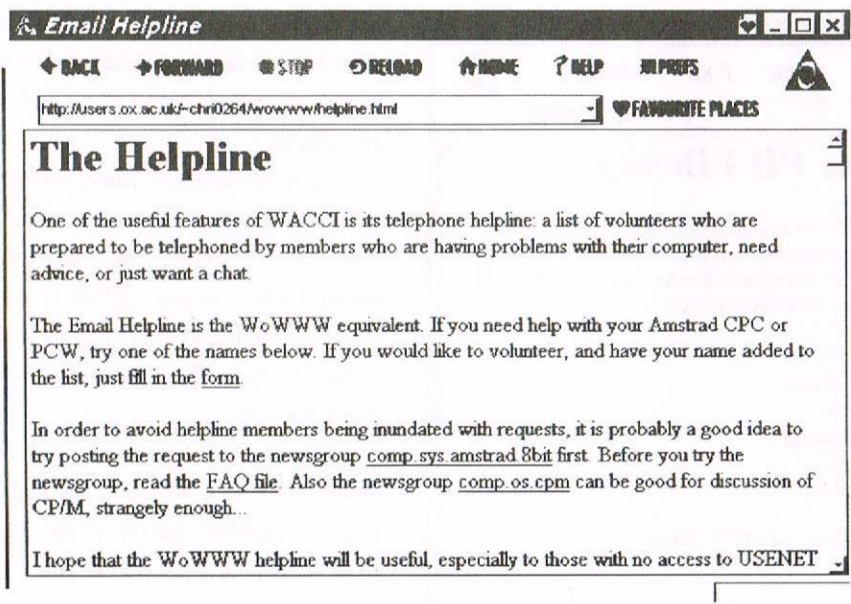
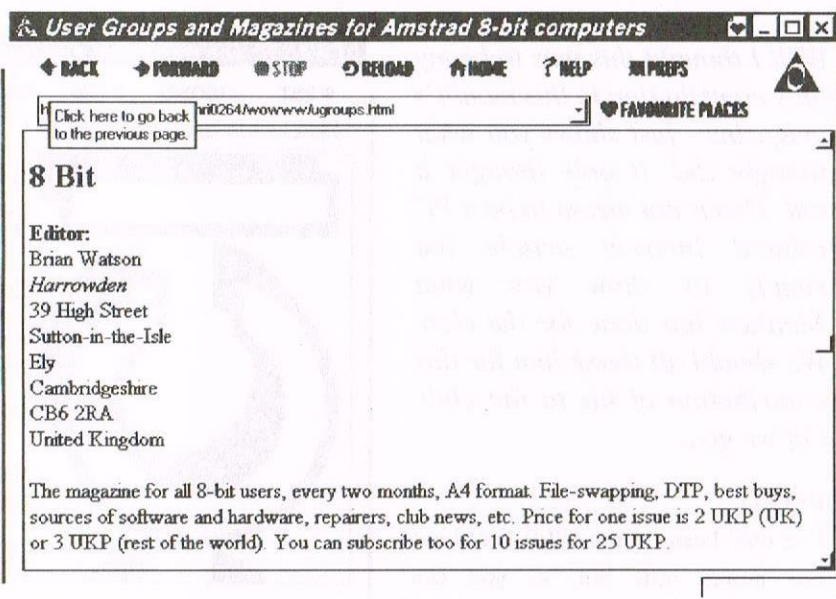


As an aside, Bill Noble (NZ member) lives in Mangakino. Philip could not find it on his map so Bill sent him one. You must remember the front cover on issue 104. Well I did a WEB search on the name Mangakino and found the WEB pages referring to the town including a beautiful aerial photograph. They call the town New Zealand's best kept tourism secret, no wonder Philip couldn't find it. I think it a good example of just how useful the WEB can be, so much data at your finger tips. Oh, I'd better get back to the WACCI pages before I get too carried away.

underlined options under Quick Index are the other various pages available.

Above is a bit of the home page with background data on the club and details. Opposite is the User Group's page and I've selected Brian Watson's popular 8BIT magazine as a sample of what's on the list.

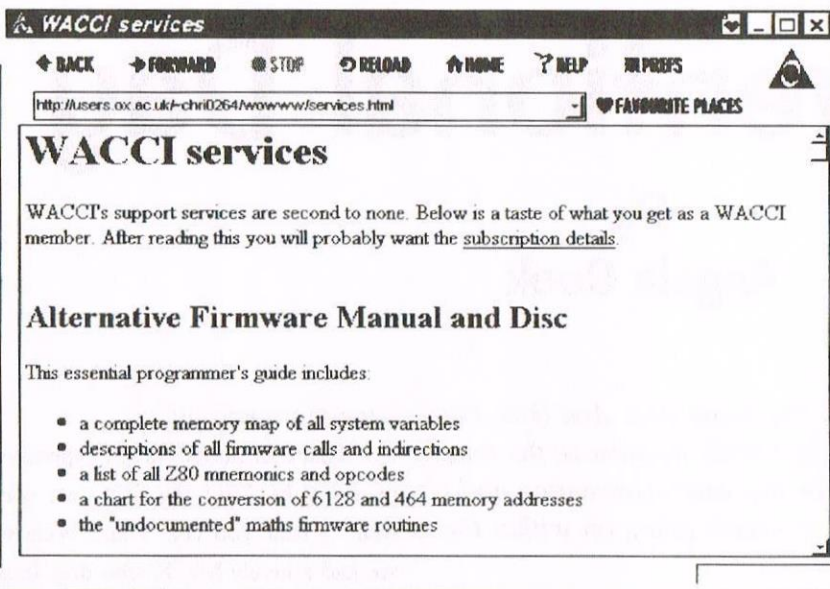
Below are details of the WACCI helpline and the Email helpline available via the WEB. The FAQ file was used by Ron Izett some time ago for a mini series in the magazine. I may copy some of the latest stuff down, if of interest to the club, and let you see it for yourself.



I'm afraid that, to the best of my knowledge, the WACCI WEB pages haven't brought in a single new member. Considering that there is a fair bit of 8 bit action out there this does surprise me. It would have been really great to tell Phillip that his pages had brought in a new member but sad to say not yet. Still I live in hope.

If you are that member that joined because of the WEB pages, please tell us as it would really make our day.

Another aside, as election '97 is upon us, did you know that you can download the latest speeches from WEB from all the major parties. I ask

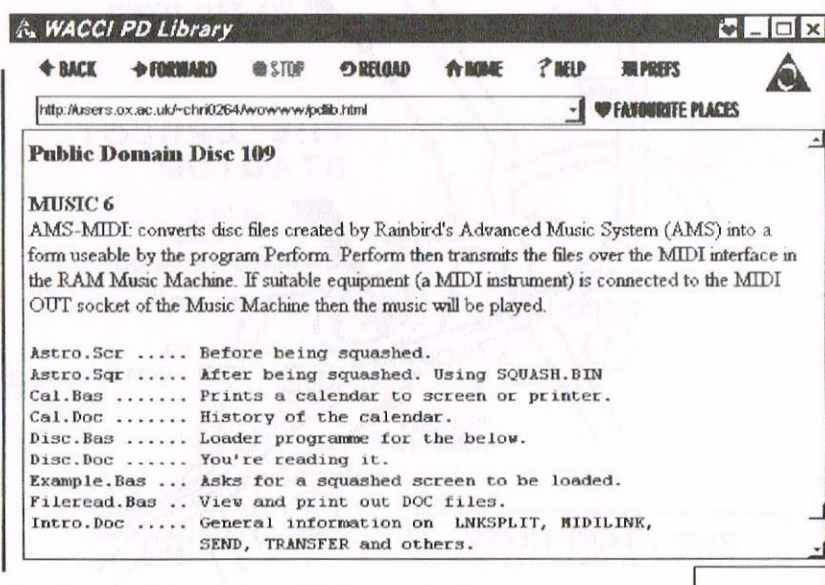
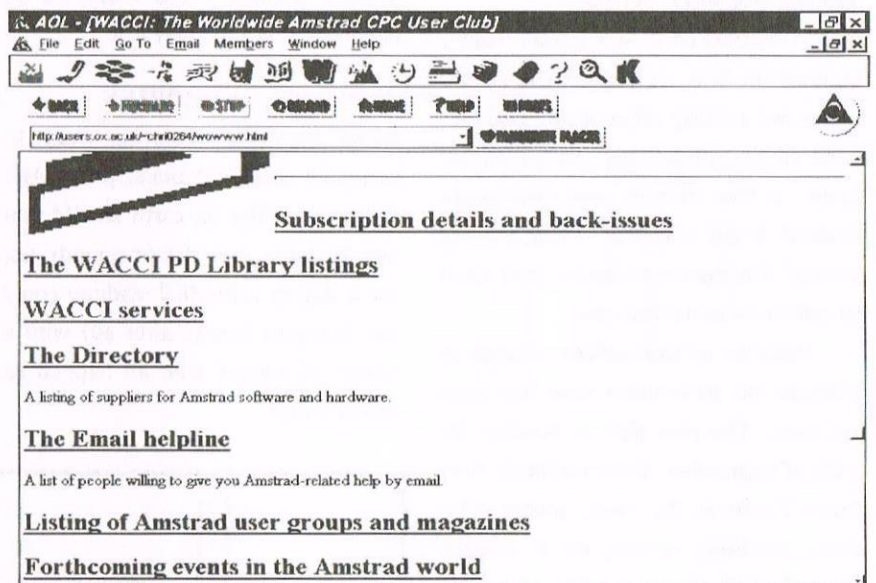


you, who would want to do that? I suppose there must be some sad person somewhere who does. Why can't they live with sound bytes like the rest of us.

Gosh, I'd better get back to the subject in hand or I'll run out of space writing what little I have to write.

Above is the WACCI Services page and you can see the Alternative Firmware Guide is being given a plug.

To the left is the bottom of the WACCI home page and below shows the details of PD Disc 109. It is one that Matthew has particular interest in but don't be fooled into thinking that this is just an example of what is in the PD Library. No, every single PD disc has



the the exact same detailed listing in the PD Library page. Full credit to Matthew for this one.

So, I hope that helps you understand what is up there and the work that has gone into the site.

As I said earlier, if I find any more relevant WEB pages than I will bring them to you.

AND FINALLY

For those who want to know (put your hands over your ears you PC haters) I'm running the Internet on a 28,800bps modem on a P150, 32Mb ram PC. The Internet service provider

that I am using is AOL (America On Line) and it costs £5.95 a month, for which I get 5 free hours on line. Thereafter it costs £1.85 per hour. The BT charges are for a local call, so if I use the WEB at the weekend, when call cost is 1p per minute, then 5 hours cost just £3.00 - not bad considering I am getting 5 hours on line per month for under a Tenner.

The software used to grab the screen shots was PaintShop Pro v4 running under Windows 95B.

Now I've laid out these pages I'd better nip off and do some more. See ya all in September I hope. *Paul.*

A Conventional Day

By
Angela Cook

Hi hello, how are you? Well I guess I'm doing fine. And that, I'm afraid, are where the niceties end. Why? Well, because at the time of writing 17 tickets have been sold for this years convention and I think you all need a little reminder of what's going on within the club. <<Thanks Angela. -Paul>>

TO BE OR NOT TO BE?

If the members of WACCI don't want a convention, fine, we'll cancel the venue, this is not a cheap affair at all. You just have to say something. As far as we knew, a few months ago everybody wanted a get together. What's gone wrong? The figures certainly don't seem to reflect what we thought.

Because of this sudden change in attitude the convention date has been set back. The new date is Sunday the 14th of September. Did everybody hear that? Those at the back, please take note. Anybody turning up at Bescot football stadium on the 6th of July is going to be in for a bit of a disappointment.

SORRY FOLKS

We're sorry about those people that had already made arrangements to suit the original date, but seeing as that was only 17 people I hope it won't be much of an upset. We know you all wanted nicer weather (though the rooms are pretty hot when everybody is in there) and so on, but I'm afraid circumstances dictate our actions.

If in a few months' time there is still little interest in the convention (we need to sell a set number of tickets you see) then the event will be cancelled and

monies returned). I'm sorry it's so harsh but that's the way it is.

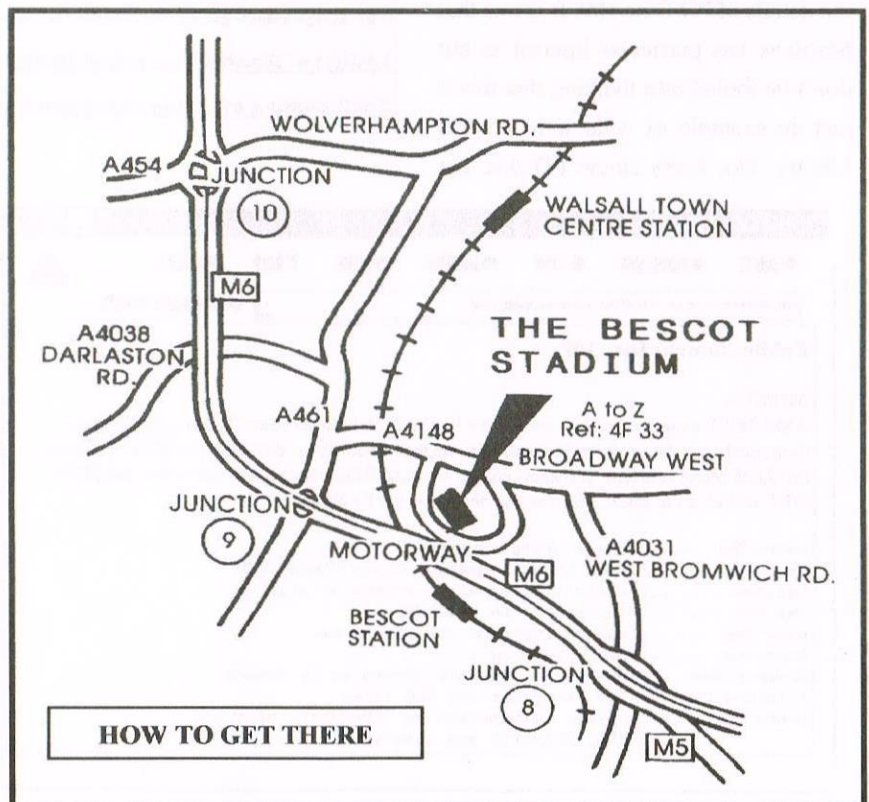
SARCASM OVERDRIVE

Some members seem to want to complain about the ticket price. And rightly so. Why on earth should you pay the huge sum of four pounds just for a day in a football stadium (only the directors lounge after all) with a bunch of nutters who all happen to own a CPC?

Because you enjoy it!

That four pounds is not expensive in any light. "But the first year was free." I hear you cry. That's because we had a lovely Mr. X who dug deep into his pocket for us. "Last year was only two pounds." That's because WACCI stumped up for the shortfall. We can't do that this year as the hire charge has gone up.

The four pounds is cheap relative to everything else. An All Forma's Computer Fair has the same entry charge and you certainly won't have as good a time there as in Walsall, or if you do you're reading the wrong magazine. Entry to a fun fair for the



day is anywhere between ten and twenty pounds. A dinner dance is also somewhat more expensive. The last one I attended was £15 a ticket which was quite expensive for my partner. A dinner dance is only an evening whereas the convention is all day and will go on longer than that if you wish it to. "Ah but at a dinner dance you get dinner too." Yes, and at the convention if you pay a little extra (about £5.99, Angie will confirm this when she knows though) you get a huge meal - John Bowley will tell you. With the entry and the meal it still totals less than the dinner dance. Of course, you can always bring sandwiches <<Or doughnuts -Richard>> <<Okay, or doughnuts -Angela>>.

"But I've got two kids to bring along and I can't afford it." Yes you can. Kids are free this year provided they don't mind humping a few boxes around. Whilst on the subject of boxes, anybody who could turn up about 9ish to form a chain to help carry the mountains of boxes in to the stadium itself will be greatly appreciated.

"But if I attend I'll want to spend money on goods for sale." This is one

of the ideas of the convention, which is why I bagged two tables for Merline-Serve: the Market Stall and ComSoft were displaying their goods and individuals had nabbed spare tables to sell their own unwanted items. Stuff at the convention is far cheaper than any other time. All Merline-Serve stuff is, for a start there are no postage prices and we also don't want to carry everything all the way down those wretched steps. Those steps remind me, anybody who thinks they may have a problem with them (they're about 30 of them, concrete and about 2/3 feet wide) contact Angie. I don't know what she's going to do but she is the Convention Organiser.

WHAT GOES ON?

You also have a bloomin' good time. I know I do and I'm stuck behind two trestle tables all day. You get to speak to people you've only ever read from/about or spoken to. Imagine all those surprises; "So programmers really do look like that", "I thought 'Jiffy No Legs' meant no legs", "664s aren't just a legend then" or even

"Steve Williams' suit was so lovely, I must ask who his designer is". You can also pick bones with those who you disagree with (see the PCs In Our Time article for a classic example).

Last year there was a Protext demonstration, Andre Howard treated us to some techy info and there were other things going on that James Coupe kindly informed us of. Everybody liked them so there are going to be more of them this year, though nobody seems to be able to tell me what at the moment, but keep your eyes open for more news as the time comes around, probably from Angie via Market Stall. There was also a rather tidily Mr. Widdly propped up by the bar. And who says this year is going to be different?

THE REALLY SLOSHY BIT

How much more do I need to say? Go back and read the last two convention reports and the lead up article Paul and I have written (issues 94, 104 and 106) if you still need to be convinced.

The basic facts are plain to see. No tickets sold, no convention. Last year somebody rather bitterly stated

that the current convention would be the last. I would really hate to see that person proved right <<So would I - Angie>>.

I want to go to the convention and I know other people do too. So please, if you've been putting it off, buy your ticket now, today, otherwise there won't be a convention. I'd like to write the convention report this year <<Great idea. -Paul>>, but I can't do that if there's no convention to report.

Angela
in deepest Sussex


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pfd 24 January 1997

VIDEO TITLING

By
Harry Gubby

Harry sent this in as a letter but I reckon it is better presented as an article, so take it away Harry...

INTRO

It was interesting to see a couple of letters in WACCI recently on the subject of video titling, not the most popular of subjects. Frank's index only mentions it twice.

Regarding Bill Ford's letter I find Michael Beckett's Run VT useful but limited. The same applies to A.Talbot's VT2DISC. ACT Electronics also produced a video titler program some years ago and offered to modify MP1 and MP2s to run with their program

Again a useful program but having neither MP1 or 2 I have to photograph the screen.

PLUG AND PLAY

Steve Harris's video titler was in the AA in July 1990. I have never succeeded recording with the hardware part of the article although I get a satisfactory image on the TV screen. The connections for the Scart plug are as follows:-

Red video in	Pin 15
Red video ground	Pin 13
Green video in	Pin 11
Green video ground	Pin 9
Blue video in	Pin 7
Blue video ground	Pin 5
Syn	Pin 16
Lum	Pin 20

I agree with Cliff Britten that to find a fully wired Scart socket on a low band VCR would be pointless although I imagine that such sockets are fully wired on high band VCRs. Some of the larger modern TVs have fully wired sockets so that presumably a suitably wired CPC to Scart lead could be used on such TVs.

TIME FOR DLAN

I have no experience with Comsoft's Videomaster. I read the review some years ago which did highlight certain shortcomings. I notice that it no longer appears in their catalogue.

My greatest success with video titling on the CPC relies on

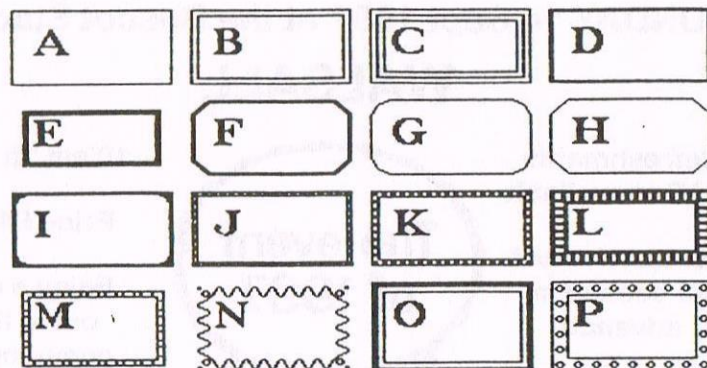
A ABC DEF 123
 B ABC DEF 123
 C ABC DEF 123
 d ABC def 123
 E ABC DEF 123
 f abc def 123
 G ABC DEF 123
 H ABC DEF 123
 I ABC DEF 123
 J ABC DEF 123
 K ABC DEF 123
 L ABC DEF 123
 M ABC DEF 123

N: "C" & "c"



P ABC def 123
 X ABC def 123
 Y ABC def 123

THOSE FONTS AVAILABLE

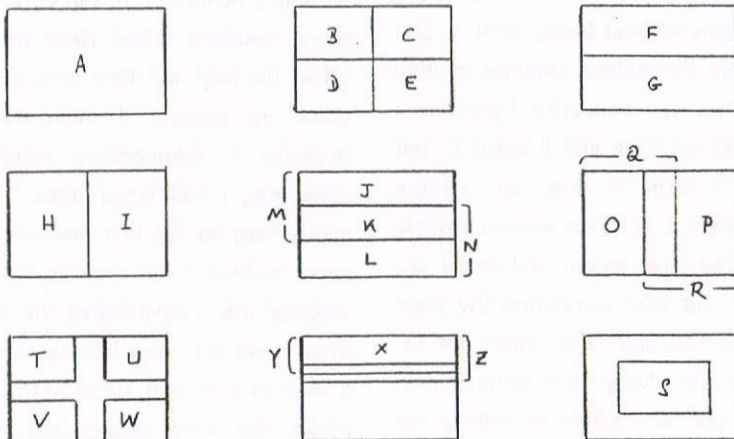


AVAILABLE FRAMES

PRESET WINDOWS

The diagrams show the approximate positions of the default windows. The exact parameters are listed below:

A	\wA 1,40,1,25\	whole screen	40 x 25
B	\wB 1,20,1,12\	top left	20 x 12
C	\wC 21,40,1,12\	top right	20 x 12
D	\wD 1,20,13,25	lower left	20 x 13
E	\wE 21,40,13,25\	lower right	20 x 13
F	\wF 1,40,1,12\	top half	40 x 12
G	\wG 1,40,13,25	lower half	40 x 13
H	\wH 1,20,1,25	left half	20 x 25
I	\wI 21,40,1,25	right half	20 x 25
J	\wJ 1,40,1,8	top third	40 x 8
K	\wK 1,40,9,16	mid third	40 x 8
L	\wL 1,40,17,25	lower third	40 x 9
M	\wM 1,40,1,16	top	40 x 16
N	\wN 1,40,9,25	lower	40 x 17
O	\wO 1,15,1,25	left	15 x 25
P	\wP 25,40,1,25	right	15 x 25
Q	\wQ 1,25,1,25	left	25 x 25
R	\wR 16,40,1,25	right	25 x 25
S	\wS 11,30,6,20	central	20 x 15
T	\wT 1,15,1,10	top left	15 x 10
U	\wU 26,40,1,10	top right	15 x 10
V	\wV 1,15,16,25	lower left	15 x 10
W	\wW 26,40,16,25	lower right	15 x 10
X	\wX 1,40,1,5	top	40 x 5
Y	\wY 1,40,1,6	top	40 x 6
Z	\wZ 1,40,1,7	top	40 x 7



THOSE PRESET WINDOWS

the use of the DLAN program on PD disc 86B. Although the manual on the disc closely follows the original manual it could not of course show the available frames and fonts which show what a wonderful program it is. I enclose photocopies of them in case they are reproducible in WACCI. I photograph the screen - this is fine in black and white - I have had little success in colour but I keep on trying!

Let's face it, computer video titling is without doubt the province of the Amiga but very good results are obtainable with DLAN and the CPC.

Harry Gubby

CPC

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A LEARNING CURVE

By
Angie Hardwick

It's funny how one phone call can change your life, but one phone call set me on a leaning curve that has led to lots of fun and loads of frustration!!

INTRO

Back in 1985 when my daughter was two I lived in a multistory flat in Bloxwich I was very isolated and being on my own with a small child it sometimes felt in the middle of the night that I was the only one alive in the world. During this time I met an old age pensioner called Bill we became friends and he would call to see me and take the dog for a walk every day.

Three years later Bill died and to my amazement left my daughter all his possessions which included an Amstrad 464 computer. Well I played around with it for a bit but eventually it got shoved in a cupboard to gather dust. Then a friend I hadn't spoken to for a year or two got in touch and in chatting said she had an Amstrad 464 and was telling me all the things it could do. I had thought it was a games machine not realising it was a computer.

THE MEETING

My friend told me about the All Formats Fairs and being intrigued I decided to go along to the next one at the Motor Bike Museum in Birmingham. After wandering around a bit guess who I met, Uncle Clive complete with stall selling lots of Amstrad bits, full of information and the WACCI magazine. Mind you most

of what he said went way over my head but at least I now knew that there was a club for my computer.

THE TRUTH COMES OUT

I must admit that when I first read WACCI I hardly understood a word but as the years went on I began to see the light (very slowly). I upgraded to a 6128 and loved the speed of the disc drive compared with the tape. I took up typing for fun and typed out every manual I could plus lots of games instructions just so I could get used to the machine.

QUESTION TIME

The great benefit of the club for me was that I could ask endless stupid questions without being made to feel an idiot the endless patience of club members was wonderful. I purchased Protext on Rom and I loved it, but when I came to print out a large document I got into serious trouble with the page layout and could not figure out why sometimes the page printed OK and other times not so. Off to the phone lines again, Uncle Clive put me straight by talking me through the Setprint options.

On another occasion I distinctly remember when trying to learn how to do a mail merge driving Paul mad

with questions which he answered gently for me when I had got stuck I had managed to get a standard letter to print but half on one page and half on the other Paul gently said "what does PL mean Angie?" I had a bit of a think and said "Page Length." He said then "look at your control codes, what PL have you got." Well you guessed it, I had followed the manual and got it in at 32: all I had to do was change that to 60 and BINGO daft eh!! Mind you the best bit was that I had followed the flipping manual.

OPEN UP THE STALL

Because of all the help and advice I received from the club I decided that it was time to give something back and when Uncle Clive left and Paul took over I offered to run a Market Stall. I've had so much fun doing this you wouldn't believe. I've talked to lots more members called them up and asked for help and they have always come up trumps, I even got to organise a Convention which is something I had never done before and believe me the first one was very nerve racking. I did so want it to go well and a few days before the actual event I was in a sheer blind panic. But it went off very well, there were a few things that went wrong and could have been better organised but at the end of the day I think every one enjoyed themselves and that was basically what I wanted.

WHAT'S IT ABOUT THEN

For me the beauty of our club is just that ,it is our club it's run by members for members, we have a great diversity of members all at different stages in their computer life and we all have something to give, I mean get this I've never written an article in my life but here I am desperately trying to put something together to help keep the club going and fill the magazine, I don't mind if it never goes into print <it most certainly has -Paul> the point is I'm having a go and so can you. It doesn't have to be technical just your experiences or a funny story.

NOW FOR SOME NEWS

You should know by now what's been happening within the club, we very nearly lost our magazine, the point is that if we want the mag to continue as many of you as possible must contribute, yes we do have to cut costs

but if we do that we can continue and I for one would be lost without WACCI.

THE CONVENTION

I've put the date of the Convention back to Sunday 14th September in order to give us more time to sell tickets please support me it's a grand day out and we do have some fun. It may be that this will be our last but hopefully I will be able to organise a much smaller get together every year. For a long as WACCI continues then I will continue to support it in whatever way possible.

THE DEBATE

Yes I know I've started something by suggesting some PC content but I'm not asking for articles just help and advice the same thing as I get with my Amstrad and Yes I'm still using my Amstrad I have no intention of getting

rid of it, Protext for me is sheer bliss after struggling with the PC. But when looking at Issue 111 I think you must agree that the quality of the magazine produced by a PC (Apple Mac?) was wonderful. If using the PC helps to produce a quality magazine like this then I'm all for it. Well done Richard.

THANKS PHIL

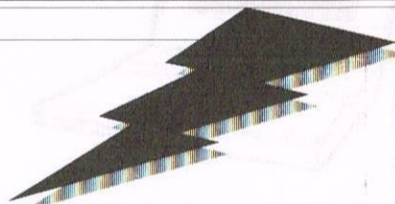
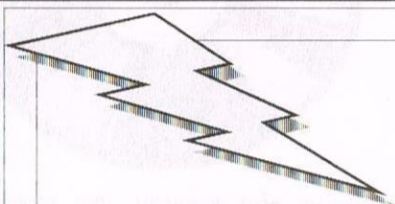
I'm sorry that personal problems have caused Philip to resign as Editor and I do want to thank him for all the hard work he has put in: perhaps when his life settles down he will be able to contribute again.

AND FINALLY...

Thank you to all the great people within WACCI that help to make it what it is may, we continue to have many more years together.

Angie Hardwick.

*Merline-Serve/KAD, Brympton Cottage, Brunswick Road, Worthing,
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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.

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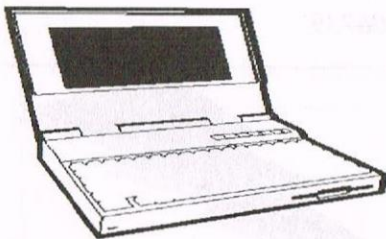
PCs IN OUR TIME

By
Angela Cook

After reading issue 111 and the comments about coverage of non-CPC items in our magazine I thought I'd put a few words on paper to discuss the matter as I see it. Any comment and debate is invited via Fair Comment, an article perhaps or I welcome any member wishing to contact me directly. I should point out that this article was written before Philip's resignation, I haven't changed any references to him and I think John's view on a sensible debate are very similar.

OPENING THE DEBATE

Any members comments' on the content and/or production of the magazine are valid. We each get a different buzz out of WACCI and we must all strive to improve it. But will including coverage of non-CPC items be an improvement? Maybe. Maybe not.



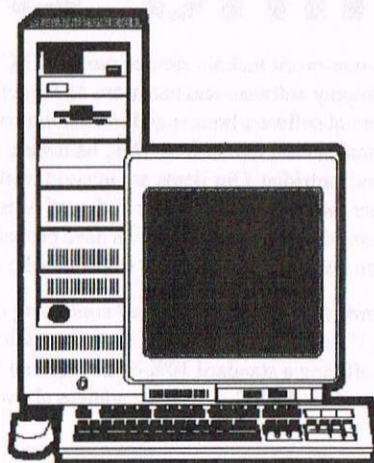
The debate has to be decided upon. I know Philip is dead set against any input about other machines (the exception perhaps being the PCW), so a collective and argumentative "we" are already at a disadvantage which makes this all the more interesting.

I would personally hate to see a "PC Page" in WACCI at all. The idea of the latest Doom clone being reviewed and where to get bug fixes for Windows 95 appals me, as I think it would most members. I see the debate here as how much, if any, coverage should we allow in WACCI concerning

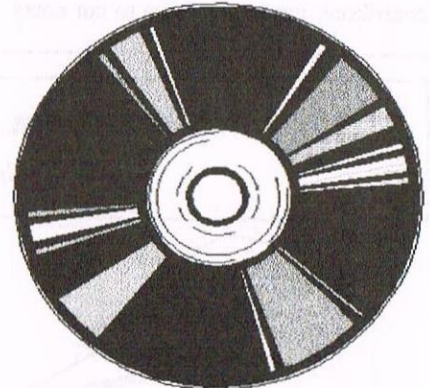
non-CPC machines, and what angle should it take? Philip sees this as a fair line to debate on, although this is certainly no open-close situation.

ANGIE, JACK AND BUNNY

Angie Hardwick, Jack Hughes and Bunny Fairhurst all have very valid points in their arguments (see 111's FC). Angie brings up the matter of many members absconding to a PC (or another machine). Perfectly true for one reason or another. We as a family got our first PC four years ago (an Amstrad one, which we would not buy again - see, an idea for an article already). This was for college work. As time has worn on we now have



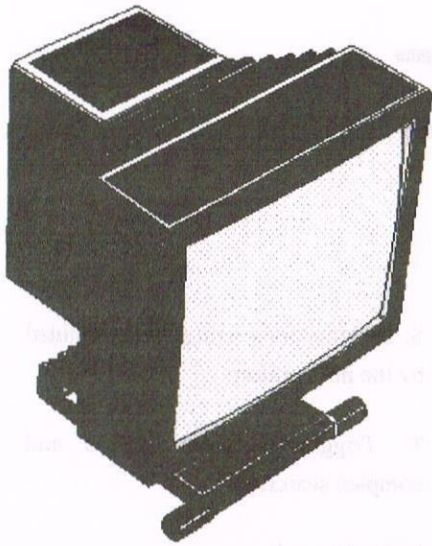
three more modern PCs in the house in regular use. For learning, college and school work (wonderful as CPCs are they don't run Microsoft's powerful relational database Access) <<the WACCI membership database has been converted from Protext to Access and boy does it make my life easier. -Paul>> and for proper money-earning work, allegedly. But we still live amongst many CPCs in regular use as any brave visitor to the Cook household can verify.



Angie also suggests that members already owning a PC could let the rest of us know of the dangers, pitfalls and wonders of the world where the CPC is not prevalent. Good idea, but would this not encourage people to get rid of their CPCs, or would horror stories convince more people to stay?

COMPATIBILITY & ALL THAT

All WACCI members have one thing in common, so to an extent these proposed articles are all going to be from a CPCers point of view. One such example is a mouse. CPC mice are completely different from those on



other machines - the speed, accuracy etc.. This may seem a minor point, but it's one worth noting as more and more PC programs are becoming mouse-dependant.

Jack's opinion on the compatibility between the PC and CPC, after much thought, is quite right (although I welcome anybody to contradict this). Text files are easily transferred if they are ASCII and not too big, though formatting is essentially lost (see the X-Files and Red Dwarf PD discs that were converted from an Amiga). Picture files, once worked out, do not pose too much of a problem as the Marco Vieth Collection or the Mr. Men demo in the PD library prove.

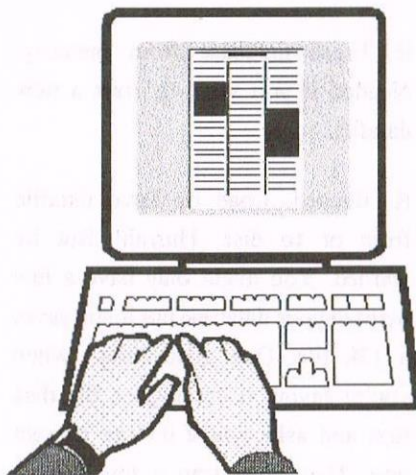
Jack also mentions the many hundreds of magazines and fanzines that are around for the PC. If there are large commercial magazines of three hundred pages or more covering elements of the PC market, and other magazines with a more specific scope, how can WACCI hope to compete? The answer is that it can't and it won't. There will be no gradual transition of WACCI into a magazine that is not CPC based. WACCI always was and always will be a CPC magazine.

TOGETHER IN HARMONY

However, the current debate now is to whether other formats can be included

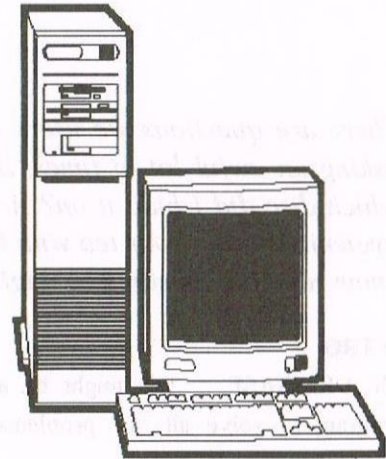
to give benefit to our current membership. Bunny is always saying that as the years wore on in AA's Techy Forum questions were edging more and more towards "How can I transfer my files to a PC?".

Something that has to be realised is that machines can and do work alongside each other. On my desk a PC and CPC Plus sit side by side and do work in unison on various tasks; Dad's desk holds a PC, PCW and a CPC; Paul's PC and CPC both work hard for WACCI; Steve Williams has a 6128 and an Amiga; Uncle Clive's CPC and PC reside together; Angie has just purchased a PC; Bunny uses an AppleMac and also his twiffic 664; Brian Watson's setup includes a 6128 Plus, a PcW16 and a PC he seems to chuck regularly out of a window (admittedly sometimes the best thing for it); and our very own Editor <<ex I'm afraid now but the new one has a PC. -Paul>> has a PCW sitting in a small alcove somewhere at WACCI dungeons. There are many more besides and we can't all be wrong <<Err? - WACCI membership>>.



I think to wind this up I am going to suggest a few articles I have been idly pondering to illustrate the line I think WACCI could take and still keep everyone reasonably happy. These articles that would have to be more

impressive than normal to get past Philip and wouldn't necessarily run in a series, just as and when something relative springs to mind:



Protex, it runs on five different platforms that I know of, something must be worthwhile saying. BrunWord PC, a comparison to the CPC version perhaps? Transferring picture, sound or even some program files from one machine to another (music from an Amiga, copying Spectrum games on a CPC, PCW CP/M programs that work on a CPC). The list quite literally is endless and I don't see any reason why WACCI can't include this ilk of articles wisely. I look forward to your comments.

<<Thanks for that Angela, I would like to add my comments if I may. Since I have the Editor's Chair then I think I can anyway!

Many WACCI members and ex-members homes have PCs. I know well about the ex-members as many write to tell of the up-grade to PC. I feel that articles on converting data from CPC to PC would be worthwhile, as you never know, you might need to refer back to WACCI some day to find out how to do it. No members appear to up-grade to a PCW so I don't feel there is much room in WACCI for them. -Paul>>

DISCBASE

By Peter Rogerson

There are questions we users of computers must find ourselves asking an awful lot of times, like what did I call that file? And which disc did I hide it on? And where is the teaspoon? It's not hygienic stirring your tea with the chewed end of a pen you didn't know you had, I mean who might have chewed it....?

INTRO

Ah: DISCBASE ... this might be a program to solve all our problems except the tea one. I hope.

Discbase is what it says it is, a database that automatically reads the catalogue of discs and stores them in memory or on disc, sorts them, searches them for a specific string if that's what you want it to do and generally helps the organisational side of your huge disc collection. There are several such programs in the public domain, so is there anything in particular that marks this effort as being better or worse than any others?

A LOOK INSIDE

Well, let's see. On loading we are presented with a series of options as follows, and each is accessed by a single keypress.

A. Adds a disc to Discbase. Use this to start your first discbase. You are asked to provide a title for the disc as well as a descriptor. This descriptor becomes part of a filename - for example, a file like "'001.0B".PET' might appear on your disc, when PET is the provided descriptor. This could be useful in itself, and as it's only a small file it might be well worth making sure your discs have got 1k or so spare for the descriptor. The only way I could find of erasing these files, by the way, is by using

DISCBASE's facility for such an action (see D below).

B. Returns to basic. B for Basic, B for Beverage: where's the teaspoon?

C. Catalogues disc in selected drive.

D. Disc utilities with its own menu, allowing you to rename, erase, erase descriptors before your disc becomes awash with strange looking files, change drive and user area and so on. (CTRL-A and CTRL-B whilst on the main menu also changes drive). Nothing new here.

E. Erase database from memory. Needed if you want to start a new datafile.

R. Record. Load or Save datafile from or to disc. Hurrah! But be warned. You might only have a few bytes in your database but it still saves a 13k file. One good thing: when you're saving it catalogues the disc first and asks you if it's the correct one. That must trap a few human errors! I've lost count of the number of times I've tried to save on the wrong disc, not that it takes long to put that little mistake right. Much worse if you try to save onto a chocolate digestive whilst dunking the disc in your tea....

S. Searches for a string, as determined by the next option ...

T. Toggles between simple and complex searches.

U. Update a disc.

V. View Datafile files. Lots of information here, from the file name, its length to the user area you've placed it in to the spare room on its particular disc. Clearly a lot of duplication if you've 50 files on a disc all in User 0, but what the heck?

There's also a provision for backup discs (avoids even more duplication), hidden files (shows just a loader when a program might consist of several files, all of which are assumed present if the loader is). Then there are CONTROL(n) toggles for backup discs (CTRL B), unselected discs (CTRL-U), hidden files (CTRL-H). And P provides a print-out if you have a printer on-line.

CONCLUSION

There we have it. A comprehensive-ish database with space for around 1200 files. Being tailored to disc catalogues it's faster and more suited to its task than, say Rambase(n) or any other standard database. I felt a bit uneasy about it writing its little descriptor files to my discs (though it's only an option) and wondered how it might cope if it came upon a disc with 0k left after I've filled it with goodies. So I tried and it told me that the disc was full, which all made sense and doesn't affect the use of the program

at all. All the options are there - load, save, search, and the normal run of disc utilities, nothing to mark DISCBASE as being particularly especial, but then it doesn't have to be I suppose. If you want a disc catalogue database then this is as good as many and better than some.

AND FINALLY...

My problem is it's all too much trouble, and having discs to organise discs which organise discs ... I get in a muddle, so I've learned to be pretty astute when it comes to the organisation of my discs by using explicit filenames, and my only problem now is I've forgotten some of

the juicy titbits that I've got and so it doesn't matter where they are.

What I need is a notepad with a couple of hundred pages and a pencil and a rubber.... Maybe someone'll invent something like that one fine day.... Anyone seen a teaspoon?

Peter Rogerson

THE FUTURE OF WACCI SERVICES

By Angela Cook

THE RUMORS

By now many rumours have circulated about WACCI, most exaggerated and some completely untrue (WACCI merging with BTL for example). You will also have been informed either via the magazine or the people involved with it what the truths are. WACCI is going through a lot of changes at the moment, and that's partly what this article is about.

SHAKEN NOT STIRRED

The club is having a bit of a shake-up at the moment (as if you hadn't noticed), we all know you want a magazine so no worries there. At the moment we are concerned about the services we offer. Under discussion is the book and software library currently run by John Bowley, the tape PD library run by Arthur Cook and Market Stall run by Angie Hardwick.

We'll deal with Angie first as she's easiest. Market Stall is not going to close, it's running well and Angie is perfectly happy at her post. She's asked me to remind anybody that writes to her to include an SSAE. This will usually be for a personal reply or sending your details on to somebody who can help you. Angie also said that any donations for the Market Stall to sell at the

convention on September 14th (note the new date) are most welcome. They can either be posted to Angie or handed over on the day. All proceeds will go into club funds and any donors are given our thanks. I'm not entirely sure how Market Stall works so perhaps Angie will write something about how to go about things for us. She'll thank me for this one day.

BOOKS, TAPES & SOFTWARE

The book library, whilst still in occasional use, is being abused by the minority. Books are lent for a certain amount of time according to their popularity and number. Some members are keeping these books longer than that time and are holding things up for other people. They are causing tension within the club, we do not need. Those members know who they are so please, buck your ideas up.

In the future the prices may have to rise a little to cover the costs of packing these books; jiffy bags et al are not cheap. At the moment it's an idea and not yet implemented.

The software library does not seem to be used much so may well be disbanded. It is mostly John's own software that he has kindly lent to members over the years.

Finally the tape library. Despite a plea in the supplement it's going nowhere fast. While Arthur has time to run the tape library he doesn't have enough of it to cover filling it as well. Aside from anything else he needs someone to come up with a way of transferring files from disc to tape in sequential order... any willing helpers please get in contact.

FACTS, GIMME' THE FACTS

So now you know the state of those services, we need to know whether you want them or not. We can't run them at a loss any longer, not even a small loss. It's not that we are in serious money troubles, but we don't want to get there.

Any services that you take advantage of and don't want to lose, please write in and tell us, whether to Fair Comment to air your views or to John. We can't work in the dark so we have to know what you all want to keep, update, change or disband. It's no good thinking that somebody else will write in, you have to too. Nothing is being decided until members have had their say, so don't fret about things being abolished without you knowing.

Angela

The MARKET Stall

with
Angie Hardwick

PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE OF CONVENTION SUNDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER. With regard to the convention PLEASE SUPPORT US if you can: tickets are now available from ME I'm sorry the price is so high this year but I have got you the FREE PD deal to compensate a little.

HELP PLEASE: Mark Johnson needs a lift to the convention.

Please contact Mark on 01375-677631 if you can help. Also Sajid Hussain would like to thank the kind person who sent him Protext on Tape.

SALES:

For Sale: 50 off 3" Discs Blank Formatted at £1.00 each.

Amstrad SM200/400 Modem £15

Des on Rom (2) £12.50

Fun School 4 on disc. 3 age Groups £5.00 each.

PLEASE CONTACT: Bob Miller at 55, Den Lane, Springhead, Oldham, Lancs. OL4 4NN. TEL: 0161-620-2118.

For Sale: CPC6128 c/w Green Screen Monitor, Multiface II, Light Pen, Tape Cassette, Books, System Discs loads of software including Mini Office II. Price is Plus Postage.

PLEASE CONTACT: Blair Iddle.

TEL: 01703-892456.

For Sale: Tape Games at 50p each as follows:

Agent X II, Alien 8, Alien Highway, Aliens, Amaurote, Angle Ball, Apprentice(The), Avenger, Back to

Reality, Ball Crazy, Barry McGuigan Boxing, Bosconian, Boulder Dash, Bully's Sporting Darts, Captain Blood, Caves of Doom, Confusion, ConQuest, Cylu, Deathsville, Destructo, Dun Darach, Energy Warrior inc Molecule Man, Fear (The), Feud, Fighting Warrior, Fly Spy, Ghostbusters, Grand Prix Sim, Gryoscope, Hacker, Harvey Headbanger, Hunchback, Hyperbowl, Ikari Warrior, Kat Trap, Knight Games, Knight Lore, Marsport (no insts), Message from Androeda, Milk Race, Mission Genocide, Ninja, Noterraqueous, Obsidian, Out Run, Paperboy, Pipeline 2, Raid, Reckless Rufus, Rick Dangerous, Rigel's Revenge, Rouge, Saracen, Shanghai Karate, Shockeway Rider, Soul of a Robot, Speed King, Spellbound, Spy Trek, Steve Davis Snooker, Strike, Subunk, Super Robin Hood, Technician Ted, Tempest, Terra Cognita, Tetris, Think, Thrust, Trailblazer, Trantor, Trap Door (The), Way of the Exploding Fist, Who Dares Wins II, Xevious, Zub.

TAPES at £1.00 each as follows:

Batman, Flimb's Quest, Gauntlet, Gauntlet II, Gryzor, Heatland, Time Scanner.

TAPES at £1.50 each as follows:

Bard's Tale (The), Stiffflip & Co.

TAPES at £2.00 each as follows:

Match Day II, Mindfighter, Price of Magik (The), Stunt Car Racer, Xor.

TAPES at £3.00 North and South.

TAPE COMPILATIONS AS FOLLOWS:

5 Computer Hits: Wizards Lair, 2112AD, Contraption, Kettle, Attack of the Killer Tomatoes at £1.00

10 Computer Hits 2 (3D Starstrike, Superpipeline 2, Technician Ted, Android 2, Fantasia Diamond, Mutant Monty, Codename Mat, Moon Buggy, World Cup, Gauntlet) at £2.00

10 Computer Hits (Herberts Dummy Run, Hi Rise, On the Run, Devils Crown, Wiggler, Dynamite Dan, Elidon, Juggernaut, Geoff Capes Strongman, Cauldron) at £2.00

Dizzy's Excellent Adventures (Panic Dizzy, Kwik Snak, Dizzy Down the Rapids, Dizzy Prince of Yolk Folk, Spellbound Dizzy) at £2.50

Four Great Games (European Games, Paws, Ground Zero, International Rugby) at £1.00

Hit Pack (Scooby Doo, 1942, Duet, Jet Set Willy, Sacred Armour of Antirad, Fighting Split Personalities) at £2.00

The Magnificent Seven (Wizball, Short Circuit, Arkanoid, Head over Heels, Cobra, The Great Escape, Frankie goes to Hollywood, Yie Ar Kung-Fu, £2.00

Now Games 3 (Nick Faldo plays the

Open, Sorcery, Codename Mat 2, Everone's a Wally, A View to a Kill) at £2.00

Summertime Specials (Solomon's Key, Bravestar, Captain America, Trantor, Rygar, World Class Leaderboard) £2.00

Taito Coin-op Hits (Renegade, Arknoid 1 & 2, Slapfight, Flying Shark, Legend of Kage, Rastan, Bobble Bobble (no instructions) at £2.00

We are the Champions (Super Sprint, Renegade, Rampage, IK+, Barbarian) at £2.00

DISC GAMES

£2.00 each: Bloodwych (no box), Stellar Outpost.

£3.00 each: Colossus 4 Chess, Trivial Pursuit.

£4.00 each: Bard's Tale(The), Purple Saturn Day.

£5.00 each: Hero Quest (includes Return of the Witch Lord).

DISK ADVENTURES AS FOLLOWS:

£2.00 First past the Post (includes Larry the Lemmings Urge for Extinction CPM).

£2.50 The River Collection Vol 1 (Into the Mystic, The Miser, The Bounty Hunter, Davy Jones Locker and Treasure Island CPM).

£2.50 The Ken Bond Collection (The Base, The Island, The Test, The Spiro Legacy, Castle Warlock CPM).

£4.00 ON ONE DISC (The Trail of Arnold Blackwood, Arnold goes somewhere else, The wise and fool of Arnold Blackwood, Angeliquea brief encounter, Brawn Free).

£10.00 each: The Hitchiker's Guide to the Galaxy, Scapeghost, Silicon Dreams (Snowball, return to Eden, The worn in Paradise)

SERIOUS APPLICATIONS

Amstrad Basic A Tutorial Guide Part 1 £4.00 on tape.

AtLast Plus (CPM) £15.00

Bonzo Blitz £2.00 disc

Bonzo Super Meddler & Hack Pack Disc) £2.00

CPM 2.2 System Disc £5.00

Mini-Office II disc £5.00

The Quill £3.00 tape

Supercalc 2 CPC disc £15.00

ROMS

Amstrad CPC 464 Rom Soldered type £5.00 Brunword MK4 Rom Module (eight bit status port) £50.00

DES (2 Roms) £15.00

Nirvana £10.00

Parados £10.00

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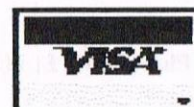
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SECTOR EDITING

By
John Hudson

Advice to those about to start sector editing - don't! There are very few times when you need to edit a sector directly. So I'll start with the workarounds.

CORRUPT DATA.

Most data is saved in ASCII format even if the program adds its own control or formatting characters to the file. You can often edit data using VDE which then of course makes a new copy on a different part of the disc when you save the corrected copy. The main problem here is understanding the rules the program uses to store data; but you need to understand those to edit the sector anyway.

A CORRUPT PROGRAM.

Theoretically, you should always have a backup of any program so that you delete the corrupt program and replace it with a sound copy.

Altering a few bytes in a program, for example, to make drive B: in CP/M recognise higher capacity discs or Supercalc print pound signs. There is no need to edit the sector. Use PUT.COM, DUMP.COM and PIP.COM to print out the .COM program and then SID.COM to edit it. But first turn off page mode with:

```
SETDEF.COM.  
SETDEF [nopage  
PUT CONSOLE TO FILE  
d:filename.ext  
DUMP d:filename.com  
PIP LST:=d:filename.ext
```

will give you a hex dump of the program on your printer. These steps will also work with Amstrad .BIN files.

With a CP/M program, identify the bytes you want to alter and add 100H to them when using SID to locate them because SID counts from location 00H in the computer but the program is loaded at location 100H. Since .COM and .BIN files are created with an assembler or a compiler, you may be able to disassemble them or, if you have kept the source files, recompile them instead of trying to edit them directly.

SALVAGING FILES

If you have a corrupt disc start by trying to copy the files using PIP in multiple copy mode. If it reports an error, note the filename and then use SET to make it a SYS file. Depending on where the error is, this may not work. But if it does, carry on until you have recovered all the files you can from the disc. Then use DIRS or DIR[user=all] to see whether the remaining corrupt files are worth recovering.

RECOVERING A FILE.

If a file is deleted, use one of the PD utilities or UNERA from HiSoft.

RESTORING TRACKS.

If your system tracks are corrupted then they can be restored. This is relatively easy in CP/M Plus because there are only a few bytes at the start of the system disc. You will need HiSoft's Knife+ but it will do it for you; you don't need to use its sector editing facilities.

WHAT NEXT

OK - so none of these have worked. Before you do anything, use a disc copier like HiSoft's WP to copy the disc. This will report corrupted sectors and carry on copying whereas DISCKIT will give up. Note the track and sector numbers. This will give you an idea of how serious the problem is. If it's tracks 0 or 1, it could be serious in terms of loss of data. If it's tracks 31 or above on a 40 track disc, it probably means the disc is in a terminal state as these tracks are the nearest to the centre of the disc and have the data most tightly packed on them.

Unless you are using a system disc, you will find the directory in the first few tracks and the files after them.

Always work from a copy so that, if you make a mistake, you can still go back to the original corrupted disc.

At heart, CP/M thinks all discs have 128 byte sectors which it calls records; the Disc Parameter Block holds the real information which is

that most of our discs have 512 byte sectors; there are 9 of these to a track giving 4.5K per track; 40 tracks gives 180K per side. Incidentally, if you stack discs on top of each other as happens with mainframe computers where ten discs may be in a single pack, all the tracks of the same number are above or below each other in a cylindrical formation. Hence the use of the term 'cylinder' instead of 'track' on PCs and mainframe computers.

SECTORS AND TRACKS

9 sectors x 40 tracks gives 360 sectors which is too many to allocate each a filename on a 180K disc. You would need several tracks to hold all the information. So, without going into details, sectors are placed in blocks and a compromise on the number of directory entries is imposed. On 3" discs, the block is 1K and the maximum number of directory entries 64; on most 3.5" formats the block is 2K and the maximum number of directory entries is 256; on hard discs, the block is usually 4K. If you have lots of short files, this 3K average per file is OK; but if you use 3.5" discs to store larger files, it is more sensible to go for 128 entries per disc because both AMSDOS and CP/M have trouble sorting more than 128 entries in response to CAT or DIR.

This, incidentally, is why conflicts can occur in AMSDOS when using 3.5" discs. AMSDOS needs to set aside a larger portion of RAM in which to sort the disc directory before responding to CAT and this can upset some programs.

Whatever sector editor you use, it will probably display the sectors in 256 byte chunks - 16 hexadecimal pairs across by 16 rows - with an ASCII display to one side to help you identify text as opposed to program content. The heading will say what track, sector or block you are looking at.

If it is the directory, each directory entry will probably have two rows and will start with the user number followed by the filename and its extension. The remaining characters will tell you where the file is stored (if you know enough to interpret them) and whether it is so long it needs another directory entry to hold the locations of more blocks. Bear in mind that the extension may look odd if it is a Read Only, System or Archived file because CP/M changes the eighth bit on the extension characters if any of these are set.

CP/M PLUS

If you are looking at a CP/M Plus disc with date and time stamps, the first directory entry will hold whatever 'label' and passwords you have given the disc and every fourth directory entry thereafter will begin with 21 (or ! in ASCII). These entries hold the time and date stamps and passwords, suitably encrypted, of the previous three files. You mess with these at your own risk but make sure that every fourth directory entry starts with 21.

If you need to restore the system

tracks and you don't have Knife+, you will need to look at a sound copy of the system tracks and copy down at least the first row of bytes (possibly more with CP/M 2.2) and then go back to your corrupt disc and restore them byte by byte. I have usually found that you only need to restore enough to get the disc read started. You can then copy all the files across with PIP, reformat the disc and restore the system tracks during the formatting.

You can unerase a short file by altering its user number from E5 back to anything from 00 to 0F but make sure you don't leave two identical filenames with the same user number in the directory. Unless a deleted file you restore in this way was the last thing saved to disc, some of it may have been overwritten by another file; in which case you will get rubbish and you may need to delete the file you have just restored so that you can recover the file that overwrote it!

If the deleted file is long enough to need more than one directory entry, you will need to know how to unerase any other directory entries as well.

You can alter text or programs if you have got this far. But, as this can usually be done without a sector editor, there is rarely any point.

For anything more serious, use a disc doctor service or get deeply into CP/M (AMSDOS uses all the CP/M conventions) and assembler.

John.

***Remember the Convention has been moved to:
Sunday 14th September 1997 but it is still at the
Bescot Stadium***

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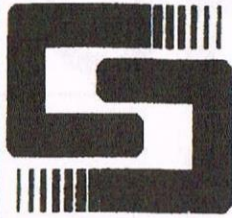
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