8BIT

ISSUE 6 June/July 1995

Harrowden, 39 High Street, Sutton-in-the-Isle, ELY, Cambs. CB6 2RA

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EDITOR'S COLUMN - ISSUE 6

Ok, I'll own up; the piece in last month's 8BIT on Amstrad's new multi-compatible PC8 *was* an April Fool. It obviously worked as I heard the story back from a computer retailer in early May as if it was a fact. I hope you all got your 8BIT's on the right day, April 1st, as I went to some lengths to try to make sure you all did.

About the only truth in it was the fact that I do freelance work for BBC Radio Cambridgeshire and they *do* still use PCWs (an 8512 and an 8256, both with 3" drives and Locoscript) for all script writing and correspondence at the Peterborough studio, and an old BBC for putting messages from callers to phone-ins through to the studios. A BBC (different model) is also used for the same purpose at the Cambridge studio. When they introduced a PC-type system to the 2nd studio at Cambridge, it baffled everyone for a few days.

The readers' questionnaire will *definitely* appear in the next 8BIT. I've finished designing it but there is just not enough space this time.

However, the small advertisements' pages are full to overflowing and the Comic Supplement runs to two double-sided pages this issue. Plus there's a Magazines Supplement. To anyone who wonders whether there will soon be more supplements than magazine, be sure I am aware of the danger of it.

I will keep doing these extras, (the more disposable parts of 8BIT) this way, as frankly they are cheaper produced this way rather than by photocopying.

I am compiling lists of suppliers, magazines, clubs, etc and these will be periodically enclosed with 8BIT with revisions. I would like to do a diary section, but am concerned that the lead time may be too great for it to be workable, also I remain to be convinced that users of one computer will attend a meeting specifically designed for users of another. Am I wrong in thinking this?

There have been a couple of letters about too much in 8BIT on one computer or another, so I'm trying to redress things by using as many generally-relevant submissions without just publishing 'fluff'. The new Home Publishing series, produced with the co-operation of a professional design consultant with extensive advertising experience, is an example of just that. Also in the pipeline is a piece on recording family trees without using dedicated software.

However, when something really new and significant comes along for one 8-bit or another I will cover it. The RoutePlanner and Commodore World reviews are examples of what I mean.

I now have my modem working (at last), and will shortly publish a Virgin's Guide to E-mail from an 8-bit user's point of view. It will be very non-technical, very easily understood.

Could I please make a plea for no more appeals to me for technical assistance? Getting 8BIT together does not leave me free time for that, even assuming I could answer the questions or refer to someone who could. This is what the advertising columns are for, after all.

PEACE BREAKS OUT IN THE 8-BIT WORLD

Andy Davis of Alchemist Research has written saying he sees a need for in-depth guides on certain aspects of the Spectrum, especially +D and the 128k versions. This has worked before with the collection which became The Plus 3 Technical Source, previously published by Garner Designs.

He makes the sensible suggestion that this is a good opportunity for the the various existing Spectrum supporters' groups to show that they can work together on a common-interest project. The proposal is that the groups would gather and submit information on the designated topic to the agreed topic compiler, who would then bring things together into word processor text files with appropriate name and address credits for all those who had helped. The compiled files would then be returned to the contributing groups for distribution, including by sale if so agreed by all parties.

The contributions could range from short articles, tutorials, information of useful software and how to acquire it, hints, tips, and short programs which can be included in the manual. For ease of data processing, Andy suggests submissions to be on +D disk, Opus disk, Spectrum +3 disk, DSDD PC disk or tape as a file from a popular word processor file, such as Tasword, but such particular details can be confirmed by the compiler.

Three areas he suggests would benefit from this treatment to start with are Spectrum 128k, Spectrum +3, and the +D disk interface. His researches show there has not been one publication to cover all the unique aspects of the later Spectrums, and the +D guide should cover its hidden extras as well as the many bugs. Such details could be passed to Datel for incorporation into new versions.

Andy is writing to a dozen groups seeking their support and I am happy to give it 8BIT's best wishes. This is a excellent example of exactly the sort of co-operation which is vital to keep *all* our 8-bits in use. New programs, peripherals and systems are still being produced for them, for example Parados for the CPCs, GEOS for the C64/C128s, Microdesign 3 and Locoscript 3 for the PCWs, and tips and tutorials are spread all over the various magazines, fanzines and club publications.

They would all benefit from being brought together in one publication per subject. The beauty of the text file idea is that, like good software, updates and revisions can be published as new features are introduced and recorded.

If you might be able to help with his specifically-Spectrum project contact Andy at Alchemist Research, 62, Tithe Barn Lane, Woodhouse, SHEFFIELD S13 7LN. If you are not a Spectrum user but see the value of a similar project for your machine, please feel free to use 8BIT as a forum to contact other users of your computer who might be able to help.

A PS, also from Andy Davis: there is a possibility of Ferry Groothedde of Sinclair Computerclub Benelux becoming SAM editor of the AlchNews diskzine. This would extend AlchNews coverage to the SAM whereas previously it has been Spectrum only. In a welcome outbreak of democracy, Andy is inviting the AlchNews readers to comment on various aspects of the proposed link up.

It occurs to me that another potentially very worthwhile spin-off of such collaborations is to improve contacts between users in different countries. Some programmers, especially the demo-coders for 8-bit computers, are already in touch (albeit as rivals in some cases) but this opens the chance of networking in another way. With the BT cheap Internet/e-mail access initiative imminent (oops, sorry, I'm not supposed to mention that yet) links around the world could become very cheap - well cheap enough, anyway. Food for thought indeed.

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3" DISC ECONOMY MEASURES

After the shortage scare a few months ago, 3" discs seem to be fairly readily available again. There are several suppliers offering either brand new, or reusable ex-software house, discs for prices from £1.25 to £3.50 each, depending on type, quality and quantity. Computer clubs are usually the cheapest sources, as they can bulk buy, and many of 8BIT's advertisers are very competitive. See the display and small ads this issue.

There are several programs which can patch damaged discs if you are too poor (or mean) to consider throwing them away. The way these usually work is to reformat the disc *losing whatever was on it* and put a blank file called CORRUPTED (or similar) on the damaged area. As long as you don't wipe this file off, the disc can be used for files. If the directory area of the disc is damaged, reformatting it as a VENDOR disc under CP/M can do the trick sometimes to make the disc reusable, but if you do this I would be aware the disc is 'on the way out' and not store important files on it.

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TIPS FOR THE LOCOSCRIPT 2 USER by Jim French of **The South Essex PCW Club**

One thing I have learned over the many years of being a PCW owner, is that it is always best to work in the M: drive not only in LocoScript but using CP/M as well. In LocoScript you can get around the documents at a greater speed i.e. top to bottom, end of line, checking the spelling etc. Also, LocoMail Merge and Fill are a lot faster, in fact everything works a lot faster in the M: drive.

I always copy a template over to the M: drive from my disc, if its not already a TEMPLATE.STD, and then edit it in the M: drive. If you also have LocoFile, you can prefix template files you want to use in the M: drive with ".DAT". This overcomes the problem of only being allowed to have one TEMPLATE.STD file per group, which are templates automatically copied to the M: drive during the LocoScript boot up (loading). This save's having to copy templates to the M: drive after booting up.

But any time involved in copying documents to the M: drive in this way will be more than saved by the extra benefits of speed in the M: drive. Also, you won't be altering original documents/templates you wanted to keep un-altered on disc, after all you cant always rely on LocoScript's limbo file system.

However, a very important point to remember is to copy your document/s back to disc once you have finished editing, otherwise everything in drive M: will be lost when you switch off! LocoScript should also give you an automatic reminder to save, to disc, any work you have on the M: drive and don't forget, you can copy documents or files to disc whilst a document is being printed all at the same time.

Margin Maker

This is a very fast way of altering the margin width when in the "margin mode". You can use the "Set" key's ([+]/[-]) to alter the margin widths as follows. Make sure the cursor is actually on or touching the left margin and you can increase this margin's width by pressing the [-] key, make it smaller by pressing the [+] key, keep pressing the [-] and [+] keys until you get the desired width.

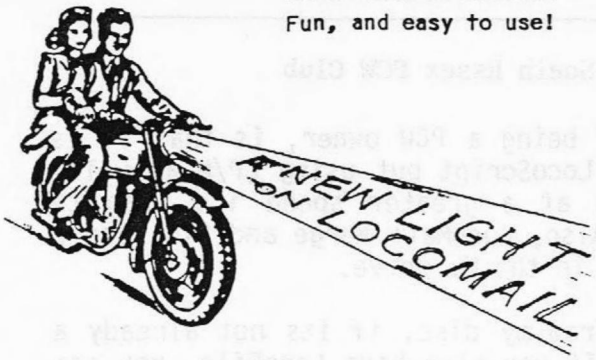
Once you have finished altering the left hand margin you can quickly get across to the right hand margin by pressing the "Space Bar" and you are then instantly whisked across to the right hand margin. Again, the cursor should be touching the margin but this time the "Set" keys work in the opposite way. If you now press the [+] key, the right hand margin gets bigger each time you press [+] and smaller each time you press the [-] keys respectively.

Unfortunately, there is no quick way of getting back to the left hand margin, as there is by pressing the "Space Bar" to get to the right hand side, from the left hand side. The only way I know how to speed things up here is to press the [SHIFT] key along with the left (or right) "Cursor" keys. Incidentally you can always use the [SHIFT] "cursor" key method whilst editing documents as well. Doing this moves the cursor forty characters across left or right and twenty lines up or down.

Also, whilst still in "margin mode" you can set tabs anywhere along the margin's line by pressing the set[+] key whilst not touching the margin's border (as above for altering the margin width). There are five tabs to choose from in this way and pressing the [+] key sets a Simple tab in place. If the [+] key is pressed repeatedly you will cycle through all the five tabs that are available. Pressing the [-] key will remove any unwanted tabs.

Jim French of **The South Essex PCW Club** can be contacted at 14 Wheatfield Way Langdon Hills BASILDON Essex SS16 6SN. The **Lawyers PCW Club** feature will return next issue.

INSTANT RECALL – LocoMail as you've never seen it before. Fun, and easy to use!



INSTANT RECALL is a set of exceptional utilities for Amstrad PCW machines running LocoScript and LocoMail. It features a sophisticated Calculator, with a memory store/recall facility; Metric Converters; full-year Calendars, showing every UK bank holiday right through to the year 2000, plus a useful Accounts Package that keeps track of your bank balance. And all to a standard of screen presentation which you wouldn't normally associate with LocoMail.

The routines work with LocoScript/LocoMail versions 1, 2 & 3 – just state 3" or 3½" disc size and send a cheque for **£9.50** to:-

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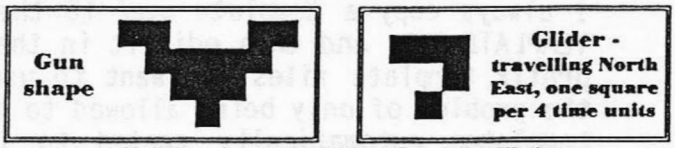
LIFE 1 50p (size 36k): "You place square blocks (called 'cells') on the playing area, and, according to certain rules, these cells reproduce or die according to how many neighbours they have. .... Particular patterns of cells have various unique behaviours, often seeming to take on a 'life' of their own. Just like the real universe, the Life universe has its own laws and properties, which have astonished computer buffs for generations. .... You're presented with a menu of interesting Life patterns, which you can place where you want to, ..." *July 1992 PCW Plus.*

LIFE2 £2.50 (size 26k) : Gun builder game, using a combination of chosen and random gliders, in as few time units as possible.



Variable randomness (0-100%) to adjust playing difficulty.

Displaceable playing area: enables restriction of growth of an unwanted colony of cells by moving them to an edge or (better still) a corner.

"Unlike other versions of life where there hasn't been much to aim for, this Life has a purpose." *November 1993 PCW Plus.*

This review recommends playing MAIL232 LIFE before considering the purchase of LIFE2. If trying MAIL232 LIFE, note the following:

- If you normally define and use the function keys (f1, f2, etc.), these must be undefined;
- The message "Requires RS232C / Centronics Interface" may be ignored - it works without this;
- MAIL232 LIFE runs much more slowly than our programs, because of its l playing area;
- The article on MAIL232 LIFE which accompanies the review shows a "simple glider". This is actually an 'r' - not a glider.

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT PREVIOUSLY PLAYED LIFE, WE RECOMMEND, AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE ABOVE, OUR GAME LIFE1 (only 50p).

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Currently, there are some 250 individual pieces of PCW software registered on the database as being available for sale or exchange (including games, spreadsheets, word processing and utilities etc.), plus in the region of 100 separate pieces of software sought by a number of users.

To access the database for sales or purchases, there is a one-off (minimal) fee for a three month period. To obtain full details of how the service operates, and how it may assist you, simply send a large sae to:

The Database Manager, PCW "Software-*Link*", Dept 8, 19, Portfield Close, BEXHILL-ON-SEA, East Sussex, TN40 2ER.

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ROUTEPLANNER - worth buying a CPC for?

I am always wary of running a review of a computer-specific program as it reopens the issue of 8BIT's bias to one computer or another. The loudest grumble seems to be that there is too much Amstrad stuff in general, and especially for CPCs, in 8BIT so in the main I am redressing the balance by concentrating on articles of general relevance. However, I'm feeling brave and this is something really special, so here we go.

RoutePlanner does for an 8-bit computer, the CPC, what Autoroute and similar programs do for a PC: it turns the computer into a driving route and timing calculator.

Upon loading, one has to select which third of the map (which covers England, Scotland and Wales) will not be displayed. The parts from which one must be omitted are: Scottish Highlands, South West England, or Wales. The part left out at this stage can still be part of the routing calculations, but there is not enough memory on an unexpanded CPC to hold all the detailed content of the the whole map at once.

Once the map has loaded, one chooses the the start and end points using the cursor keys and the 'zoom in' and 'zoom out' patches to the right of the display. Your selected points are displayed by name if they are towns or cities but the system also allows you to select a road junction if the place where you live is not shown by name. If there are places you would rather avoid (for whatever reason) this can be built into the calculation which the computer then makes. You can then choose the 'fastest' or 'shortest' route.

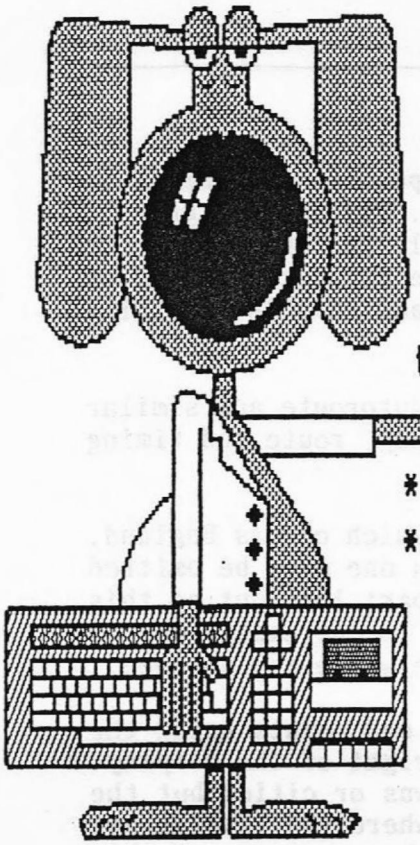
As an extreme test example, I selected Land's End to John O' Groats. This calculation took a little over 30 minutes, so if *you* are planning to work out a long trip you can boil the kettle, make a cuppa, and wash the car while the CPC is thinking. All the while it is calculating a clock display turns, reassuring you that it has not locked up. Shorter trips are worked out proportionally quicker, usually no more than 3-5 minutes. Either way, you'll save this time off your trip as it will give you a well-planned route.

The route chosen is automatically highlighted on the map following the chosen roads and it will give you the estimated travel time by using a value system for the types of roads used. You can change these values to what suits your driving habits. Motorways might be covered at an average of 70mph, main A roads at 55mph, secondary A roads might only allow 35mph, and B roads 30mph for example. 14 hours 37 minutes was the prediction for the 833 mile trip (an average of 56.98mph), but this changed to 15 hours 33 minutes when I loaded *my* expected speed values for the types of roads used.

If you wish, the program will print you out an itinerary with way points en route accompanied by the predicted elapsed mileage and times along the way (each section *and* an accumulative figure). I tested RoutePlanner over a journey from my home to Sheringham and found the 71 miles was spot-on, and the time only 4 minutes out, but I *did* get stuck behind a tractor on the way. Very impressive.

RoutePlanner is available from Radical Software, *Brympton Cottage*, Brunswick Road, WORTHING, Sussex BN11 3NQ. Telephone: 01903 206739

A program like this is almost a must if you drive about a fair bit. I do, and my overall conclusion is that I think it is a wonderful program and a good enough reason for the owner of any other computer to buy a cheap second-hand CPC just to be able to use it. For as far as I know, there is nothing like RoutePlanner for any other 8-bit computer. If I'm wrong and there is, please let me know and I'll cover it for 8BIT. I would also be very pleased to cover any program for any 8-bit computer which does a job that no other 8-bit attempts with any success.



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IT'S A FUNNY OLD WORLD

Tim Asson writes to confirm that he too has had difficulty getting hold of an 8-bit magazine (**Commodore Format**) in branches of 'a certain National Newsagent' - this time it's their Birmingham city centre branch. Yes, all right I'll come clean; we are talking about WH Smith. Having phoned to ask when **Commodore Format** was due he was told "in about a week". He then phoned Future Publishing, who said that 10 copies had already been delivered to the Birmingham city centre branch and that *they* would contact the shop.

Later that day, The Man from Future He Say "Yes, they would be getting another 10 copies" and Tim duly got his on the following Monday. And that appears to be that, unless of course you know different.....

* * * *

Continuing on the theme of the debate on censorship and other related issues discussed in February's **8BIT**, **Amstrad Action** carried a short news piece recently about Watchdog-8 or PSD (Professional Standards for Distribution). Both outfits apparently set up to monitor computer pornography in PD libraries and so on and working alongside Trading Standards and the computer crime divisions of county constabularies and with New Scotland Yard.

Watchdog's 'Eye in a Pyramid' logo was printed together with an address (Prism PD [Watchdog-8], 13, Rodney Close, RUGBY, Warks, CV22 7HJ, and a name and number (John Dudley, 01621 778778) was given to ring for further details. So I did.

I started by introducing myself as editor of **8BIT**, said I'd seen the piece in **Amstrad Action**, and would like more details. Rather surprisingly, John Dudley did not know his name and the PSD was being associated with the project, and said his only contact with Prism PD had been to caution them about the content some of their PD stuff. I asked him, very nicely of course, on what basis his organisation operated. At this point he became rather defensive, and said the outfit was much less active now than it had been, as the more extreme content of PD libraries has now largely disappeared. Despite his claim that the PSD still exists, my request for further information by post has not brought anything through my letterbox.

My impression is that the PSD is, or was, more or less a one-man moral crusade, now diminished due to the issue no longer being 'News'. As to Watchdog-8, I have written for details and that request has fallen on stony ground too. The claims of working alongside official bodies appears to be a spurious attempt at respectability by association.

My feelings on censorship, and the need or otherwise for it as it applies to 8-bit computing, are summarised in February's **8BIT** and were published to invite comment and dialogue. There has been insufficient response (yet) to publish a follow-up piece. My feelings on self-appointed authorities setting themselves up to *arbitrate* on their fellows' moral issues, apparently in the main for their own aggrandisement, are that they should operate as any other individual citizen through the existing statutory bodies if they feel they have a case worth pursuing.

It may seem to be the same kind of mentality which encourages perfectly ordinary company employees to dress up in pseudo-militaristic uniforms to police shops and shopping centres. Remember though, that deep down inside, they know they look silly. Just try laughing in their hearing and see their discomfort. As long as we don't take these nitwits seriously, they haven't won. In the month that follows the VE-Day 50th Anniversary, it is as well to remember that humour helped to win the war too.

WEIRD WIRED WORLD

It may seem a little unfair to devote 3 pages to the more 'uncertain' side of telecomms, but with us all being told daily that if we're not on-line we're nowhere, I feel a duty to **8BIT** readers to point out that it is not yet a perfect world.

My crusade against the 0 (zero) being added at the beginning of most phone numbers on "One Day" continues. Just before all the numbers changed, our local radio station, BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, invited two BT ~~nobs~~ senior executives into the studio to answer listeners' questions 'live' on the air.

I duly phoned in and asked why an extra digit, the 1, was being added, when commonsense suggested instead simply changing the initial zero, which starts all numbers (except no more than 200 service and emergency numbers), to a 1 where local demand required additional lines. This would keep the whole area code the same size, and the last three digits of the old exchange code in an area would be constant, thus helping us all to remember numbers more easily.

"The initial 0 has been with us now for some years, and is now an accepted part of the dialling system," replied the nob.

"I am not disputing that," said I, "I am just saying that *adding* a digit for everyone to have to remember is not the most efficient way to extend the availability of numbers to your subscribers."

"The initial 0 has been with us now for some years, and is now an accepted part of the dialling system."

Is this *live* radio, I wondered?

"You just said that."

"Well, it's true."

"I am not saying it's not," I persisted, "I'm saying that having *got* it, *use* it to extend the number of lines, rather than lumbering us with an extra digit."

"The initial 0 has been with us now for some years..."

At this point Chris Ashleigh, the presenter, intervened and said he would have to move on to another call. Frankly, I didn't blame him.

* * * *

Here's a good thing. There is a local-call rate service on 0345 111222 called the Postcode Line which will give you up to 3 postcodes if you supply the address. I have used this often and can attest that it is a service staffed by very helpful people who do their best to help. 9-5 weekdays only, but a good 'un, nevertheless.

* * * *

I cannot confirm this, but a correspondent writes, "After a month or so of not contacting an old friend, I tried to ring him. The line remained 'open' as if I hadn't finished dialling the number. I tried again and got the message '<townname> numbers have been changed. Please replace the handset and re-dial using the code 01??? followed by 5, and the old five figure number.' I did, only to receive the message '<townname> numbers have been changed. Please replace the handset and redial using the code 01??? then the remainder of the number, *omitting* the initial 5 from the old six figure number.'

WEIRD WIRED WORLD-PT 2

East Mercia Police have just gone on-line with the Internet. So now you can get up to date information on current police campaigns, or e-mail them tip-offs from the comfort of your home. You can support the tip with a scanned photo if you think it would help. Having seen many photos digitised by an 8-bit I'm afraid I have doubts.

* * * *

Another small effect of this extra digit nonsense: I've just received a "Home Call" Charge Card from BT for my son to use when he needs a lift for the last twelve miles home from our nearest station (back from sixth form college). He proudly unpacked it and sat at the kitchen table studying the instructions.

"It's got the wrong phone number on it!" he said, suddenly.

And indeed it had. Because the BT database and mailmerge programme which prints the user's phone number into the instruction letter was designed for the old version of the numbers, adding the 1 after the initial 0 results in losing the final digit from the number when it's printed out. It doesn't mean the card won't work, it just makes BT look a bit daft. After all, if *their* systems can't handle the change, what chance have we poor suckers got?

* * * *

And another thing..... The latest edition of BT's Business News declares (almost proudly) that an astonishing 25% of business calls don't get through. According to Mark Freer, a BT Marketing Manager, *most* of these calls would get through if more business subscribers invested in additional lines.

But what about the rest, I wonder. It couldn't be due to the increased difficulty of dialling, could it? Unfortunately, I find that with our recent conversion to pulse-dialling at home I get a lot more failed calls than before. Am I dialling too fast for it to cope with, I wonder?

* * * *

Which leads me on to another thing: an apparently undocumented feature of the gradual changeover to pulse-dialling systems throughout the country. Normally, you can tell if you are in a pulse-dialling area by the fact that as you start to dial you here a clearly-audible 'bleep' each time you press a key. But if the phone box you are using has not yet been converted you can still sometimes get onto the clearer system by dialling a '*' (star) before you dial the number you want.

For example, using a Mercury Calling Card you dial the 0500 800800 and wait for the message to "Please enter your card number and PIN." Dial * then your card number and PIN, then the number you want. If you have succeeded you will hear bleeps as you enter the numbers after the star. As well as a faster connection, this will also get you a clearer line. You might try inserting the star in the dialling sequence with BT numbers. I have had some success but cannot find a consistent rule to quote.

* * * *

Does anyone else use a Mercury Calling Card for long distance calls? Once you've found a BT phone box (as Mercury are withdrawing all theirs), ideally with pulse-dialling to allow you to dial direct, you have to dial 0500 800800, followed by a 16 digit card number, a 4 digit PIN, then the actual number, usually 11 numbers. That's 41 numbers in all.

contd.....

contd.....

If you key them in too quickly but make a mistake you are offered the choice of deleting one digit or all of the sequence you are currently entering; assuming this does not throw you completely, you don't have to start all over again. However, if the PIN number is what you mis-dial you are allowed to finish dialling the whole number you want before being told you can't have it.

If you key numbers in too slowly, and I mean leaving more than about 3 seconds between any two digits, either the system aborts and connects you to a Mercury operator (operator-connected calls cost more, of course), or if it's later in the sequence (41 numbers, remember) it gives you a cheerful request to "please redial, using the full national or international code." So if you are getting into all this, and want to dial a *really* long string of numbers, go for an international call.

This Mercury card service compares with BT's Charge Card service for which you dial 144, followed by an 8 digit card number, a 4 digit PIN, then the actual number, usually 11 numbers. That's only 26 numbers in all. It sounds almost reasonable.

* * * *

The company which compiles BT's directories have just issued a new one for area 225 (Peterborough and district). Subscribers are advised not to throw the old one away because 14-16 thousand of Wisbech's domestic numbers have been omitted. BT is doing the decent thing of course and allowing free local directory enquiries calls for Wisbech, but *only if callers claim this "special offer"*. What an "Oops". I bet the poor company who compile the directory information are embarrassed. Step forward..BT! And what's this I hear about similar happenings in the Nottingham area?

* * * *

For the first time in about 25 years, I read a Sunday Express on 7th May 1995. Imagine my surprise when I found the following:

1) Patricia Vaz of BT was named the Business Woman of the year last Wednesday. Credited with forcing Mercury to quit the pay phones arena, she was also in post while the fail rate of BT's public phones improved from 33% to just 4%. She is now heading a major new BT project. I suppose it wouldn't be the top secret "affordable Internet access for all" project, would it? Who said that?

2) Carole Malone, a columnist, writes that when she rang to complain about a number being engaged for three hours she was told the exchange was suffering from "terminal congestion" - ie the system could not cope. In a week when BT spent £100,000 a day on advertising she opined that it should stop telling us that it's good to talk and give us a network that allows us to. I have some sympathy for this, but lose it a little when I hear from her that one of her journalist chums has been ringing up Winston Churchill MP (the current one, of course) at home at 8pm when any *gentleman* might be expected to be just sitting down with his lady wife to dine. Bounder!

3) A good news story to finish with: In the depths of mid-Wales, Abraham Davies and his wife had been without a phone because of the prohibitive cost of installation. Then they heard of a BT special offer of installation for £99 + VAT. Mrs Davies quickly signed up; "it was too good to be true." It sure was: a letter arrived shortly after apologising that a mistake had been made - the installation would instead cost £22,000 (+ VAT?) The couple insisted the contract be honoured and *BT chairman Ian Vallance* eventually agreed. He must have felt they could just about afford it out of last year's £2.7 million profit.

Notes for advertisers:

1) Please help readers by giving your town's name and county if you are only quoting a phone number eg: 01353 (Ely) 777006. Show any time restrictions you would like respected and give a name which a contact can ask for.

2) Please mention **8BIT** when responding to advertisements.

3) Adverts for the next "**8BIT**" must be received by 15th Jul 1995

* * * *

AMSTRAD PCW - FOR SALE

8000+ guide to Microdesign with 3" disc £8. Blackstar adventure game on 3" disc. £8. SCA mini-print interface with the lead for printer £15. Peter Edwards. Tel: 01312 (Edinburgh) 297380 REF:F

Amstrad PCW8256 with Printer, RS232, manual and several programs incl Word Processor. Ideal for home office £100 ono. Phone John 01929 554109 REF:L

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AMSTRAD PCW - WANTED

WANTED FOR A PCW: 'Grammatik' or any other program that checks Grammar on a PCW. Contact Jim French on 01268 415255. 14, Wheatfield Way, BASILDON, Essex SS16 6SN REF:K

Protext wanted. Also printer head for an Amstrad DMP2160 printer? Secondhand, or is there any supplier *that still has them? Mr John Jordan,* 13, The Green, Lanesboro, Co Longford EIRE REF:L

I would appreciate details of any items for sale or exchange related to PCW8512. Hardware, printers, software, peripherals, programs, discs, manuals, books, etc. Require especially any items related to Protext or Basic, and manuals for Microdesign, Masterfile 8000, Dbase II, Frank Bohan, 13, New Road, Elsenham, BISHOPS STORTFORD, Herts. CM22 6HA REF:O

WANTED: Rombo Vidi set-up for a PCW, complete with instructions. Must be working! Please send details of price etc to: Mike Elliston, 96, Sparrows Herne, BASILDON, Essex SS16 5EX REF: L

WANTED: Protext wordprocessor in a recent version. It is to run on a PCW, but CP/M Protext as supplied for a CPC 6128 is the same. Please telephone: 01202 876807 if you can help. REF:F

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PCW - MISCELLANEOUS

CAPITAL COMPUTER CLUB, Box 1100, Wellington, New Zealand. For your info old title since 1988 was 'Amswell' at same address. We now have members with Amstrads, Amigas, Macs, Sanyos and PCs with DOS and CP/M. We subscribe to PCW Plus so are well up to date. We welcome UK enquiries. Write to: Mr Max Sturgess at: 1/109, Watt Street, Featherston, Wairarapa. NZ REF:F

The Cornwall PCW Club meets on the second Saturday of each month (July and August excepted) in St Austell. All those interested in PCWs are most welcome to join us. Details from John Walker on 01752 (Plymouth) 706266 REF:F

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COMMODORE - FOR SALE

Lemmings for the C64/C128. Brand new, unused, and boxed with full instructions. All 100 levels on 3 5¼" discs for only £6.50 (incl p&p). Cheques etc to: Duncan Tizzard, *Folly Farm* Cold Ashton CHIPPENHAM Wilts SN14 8JR. Tel: 01225 (BATH) 891014 between 7pm and 9pm REF:Q

COMMODORE - FOR SALE contd

RETROS is a brand new company producing software for the C64. For a copy of our first compilation, The Magnificent Six, send a cheque or PO for £1.99 made payable to Matthew Withers to: Matthew Withers, Retros, 209, Ruskin Road, CREWE, Cheshire CW2 7JY REF:J

C64 games for sale from £1 including Codemasters titles and many more. Interested? Contact Denise, 48, Eastern Avenue, CHIPPENHAM, Wilts. SN15 3LW. Send SSAE for lists REF:H

"FONTS FOR GEOS/1" - 21 original fonts for use with Geos. Most have multiple point sizes with pound (£) signs. Includes a graphic font to help design special dividers in your documents. 1541 disk. £3.99 including p & p in UK. Michael D Pearson, 31, Saxon Close, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire CV37 7DX REF:F

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COMMODORE - WANTED

Wanted: Commodore 64 contacts in Cheshire please. Tape or Disk. Leon 01606 861647. REF:J

Wanted! Vic 20 Software/Hardware etc. Contact: Leon 348, Station Road, Winsford Cheshire CW7 3DG. Tel: 01606 861647. REF:J

WANTED: COMMODORE FORMAT 40 (Jan 1994) in mint condition with/without covertape. Also Wanted - C64 cassettes in mint condition of: Jet Set Willy 1, Dictator by Dk'Tronics, Graham Souness International Soccer and Multimixx 5. Good prices paid. S Ross, 3, Deanbank Street, DUNDEE DD2 2EA REF:F

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COMMODORE - MISC

Run a C64-related fanzine? Want an experienced writer for it? Write to me, LS Bebbington at LS Bebbington, 248, Station Road, Winsford, Cheshire LW7 3DG. Please enclose a sample issue, if at all possible. REF:G

SIXTY-FOUR! Is an exciting new fanzine dedicated to Commodore 64 computers. It contains all sorts of C64-related material and even comes with a cover disk from issue 3 containing exclusive demos of upcoming games. Issues 1, 2, 3 now available. For more information write to SIXTY-FOUR! 5, Crane Avenue, Yaxley, PETERBOROUGH, Cambs PE7 3JH or you can phone Martin Haywood between 6pm and 7pm on 01733 (Peterborough) 245554. REF:L

AMSTRAD CPC - FOR SALE

Huge list of 2nd hand CPC tape and disc Software at sensible prices. All originals with instructions. Send 1st class stamp and return label for lists. BA Watson, c/o **8BIT** magazine. REF:T

Used 3" discs formatted and labelled - 60p each or 10 for £5. Also CPC games on tape. For more details please contact Mark Johnson, 13, Ashway, CORRINGHAM, Essex SS17 9EB or telephone 01375 677631 after 5pm REF:F

Amstrad CPC464 games for sale: Kick off, Hypersports, Gary Lineker's Superstar Soccer, 4 Soccer Sims, Peter Beardsley's Intl. Football, Werewolves of London, and Cricket Crazy 50p each Phone 01827 260729 (Tamworth, Staffs) after 7pm REF:F

BUMPER BUNDLE of CPC Software for sale, mainly games, some utilities. 146 boxed tapes with instructions, 40 unboxed tapes with no instructions, 28 boxed discs with instructions. For sale as one lot at only £50 ono. (List is available for further information). Steve Lee, 48, Field Road, Ramsey, HUNTINGDON, Cambs PE17 1JP. Telephone: 01487 814043. REF:F

LOADS OF CPC goodies for sale: Tapes, Discs, Roms, Books, Mags. Send A4 SSAE: *Brympton Cottage*, Brunswick Road, WORTHING, Sussex BN11 3NQ. REF:F

Amstrad Actions: 29-41 (Feb 88-Feb 89), 46 (Jul 89), also ACU for May 1990. £1 each incl p&p. BA Watson, c/o **8BIT** magazine. REF:T

AMSTRAD CPC - FOR SALE contd

Amstrad CPC drive A belts (flat type) with fitting instructions: £2.45 including p&p from Mr AJ Howard, 65, Altyre Way, BECKENHAM, Kent BR3 3ED REF:F

BARGAIN CPC GEAR: CPC6128 Computer with Internal drive, colour monitor, MP2 modulator, Romboxes, a Fleet EPROM programmer, new and used blank EPROMS, an RS232 interface, joysticks, a Dart Scanner, ABBA and 3rd drive switches, FD1 drives, Multiface 2, Lightpen, RAM-ROM, Training System, Serious and games software, Amstrad Action cover-tapes, manuals, clip art, new 3" and 3½" discs, disc boxes, covers, and more. Phone for list. David 0181 519 9423. REF:F

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AMSTRAD CPC - WANTED

TAPE GAMES, brand new for Amstrad CPC. Games include Tempest, Radzone, Saracen, Sweevo's World, Die Alien Slime, Marsport, Angle Ball, etc. Prices: £1.30 each, or 5 for £5.95. To order, or for further details, write to: Duncan Tizzard, *Folly Farm*, Cold Ashton, CHIPPENHAM, Wilts SN14 8JR. Tel: 01225 (BATH) 891014 between 7pm and 9pm REF:Q

WANTED: Protext on disc for a CPC6128. Around £8 or £9. Phone: 01203 362063 or write to: Ray Neal, 56, Houldsworth Cresc, Holbrooks, COVENTRY CV6 4HJ REF:K

Amstrad CPC and C64 (Commodore) games wanted. Collections preferred. Telephone 01132 (LEEDS) 671393 REF:F

WANTED AMSTRAD ACTIONS. Details of dates, cover tapes and price wanted for each to David Freeman, 24, Sandays Close, The Meadows, NOTTINGHAM NG2 2NP. Can collect within reasonable distance depending on quantity for sale. REF:I

CPC games wanted. Willing to buy collections. Details to: John, 78, Holtdale Avenue, LEEDS LS16 7SG REF:F

WANTED FOR A CPC: Comparator Disc Utility from Verysoft - £15 offered + p&p. Also wanted: Reversiboard, and Amstrad Actions 1, 2, 33, 47 and 54. write to Peter Curgenven, *The Hollyar* Bay Road, Trevone Bay, Near Padstow, Cornwall PL28 8QZ REF:H

Wanted for the Amstrad CPC 6128: these adventures on disc - Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy (Infocom), Ingrid's Back (Level 9), Also wanted, these games on disc - Meltdown (Alligator), Knight Games (English Software), AMSTRAD ACTION MAGAZINES issues 1-7 inclusive. The cover prices offered. Jo Wood, 38, Stonehill Drive, Rooley Moor, ROCHDALE, Lancs OL12 7JN. Telephone: 01706 861185 REF:P

CP/M Protext wanted (Same as PCW version). Also Easywriter (originally published by Interceptor). Still need a printer head for an Amstrad DMP2160 printer? Secondhand, or is there any supplier that still has them? If so, please let me know the supplier's name and address. Mr John Jordan, 13, The Green, Lanesboro, Co Longford EIRE REF:L

Amstrad Actions 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 - Reasonable price paid. Also the game "Quack-A-Jack" on Tape or Disc. Contact: Mrs. Christine Raisin, 117, Tilbury Rise, Cinderhill, NOTTINGHAM NG8 6DE. Tel: 0115 9765163. REF:N

WANTED Keyboard for CPC6128. Would consider 'complete with monitor' but must be able to post or deliver. Phone 01203 362063 or write to: Ray Neal, 56, Houldsworth Crescent, COVENTRY, CV6 4HJ REF:L

'ROMBO ROMBOX' wanted for original Amstrad CPC 6128. State the price wanted. Apply: Mr RE Hobday, 43, Cody Road, Clapham, BEDFORD, Beds. MK41 6ED REF:F

'DISC BASE' + a manual for CPC. £6 (incl p&p.) RE Hobday, 43, Cody Road, Clapham, BEDFORD, Beds MK41 6ED REF:F

CPC - MISCELLANEOUS

Free PD to all readers of **8BIT**. Adventures, Games, Demos, Slide Shows, for the AMSTRAD CPC. PD supplied on 3" and 3½" discs. Send SSAE for details and PD list to PD Fun *Folly Farm* Cold Ashton CHIPPENHAM Wilts SN14 8JR. REF:Q

WACCI. If you have a CPC then you need us. Send a 29p stamp to: WACCI, 7, Brunswood Green, Hawarden, Deeside, CLWYD CH5 3JA to see what you are missing! REF:T

IMPACT - Yes this crazy discmag can be yours, free! For a copy send a disc and SSAE to: IMPACT, 53, High Lane, Burslem, STOKE-ON-TRENT, Staffs. ST6 7DF. Issues 3-5 available (please state which when ordering). Issues 1-2 were killed by my 3½" drive but can be obtained from RSPD (address in AA Amscene directory) REF:F

KING ARTHUR'S DOMAIN PD Library for all CPCs. Send 3" or 3½" disc + SSAE: KAD, *Brympton Cottage*, Brunswick Road, WORTHING, Sussex BN11 3NQ. REF:F

ARE YOU A FRUSTRATED AMSTRAD CPC USER seeking help and support? Then why not join the United Amstrad User Group for a bi-monthly magazine, free PD material, concessions and support, all for £8 per annum. Send SSAE to Gordon Wooliscroft, 2, Wrenbeck Drive, Otley, West Yorkshire LS21 2BR for details. REF:F

Bonzo's Scrapyard number 12 now available. The newsletter for CPC tape to disc transfers via the **Bonzo** suite of programs. Price - a large SSAE plus an extra 1st class stamp. From: **Bonzo's Srapyard**, 29, Chapter Road, Strood, ROCHESTER, Kent. ME2 3PX REF:T

GD.PD: The ultimate in PD software at only 25p per disc side (copy charge) for your Amstrad CPC. For the GD.PD list send an SSAE to: Dave Stitson, 6, Connaught Avenue, Mutley, PLYMOUTH, Devon PL4 7BX REF: L

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SINCLAIR SPECTRUM - FOR SALE

48k Spectrum games: Their Finest Hour £1.50, all the remainder (Airline [company simulation], Dreadnoughts [Sea Wargame], Special Operations [Graphic Wargame], Tornado Low Level [Arcade?], War Zone [Tanks Wargame]) all 75p each. Also books: 20 programs for the ZX Spectrum £2, Spectrum Spectacular as new £5. All incl p&p. BA Watson, c/o **8BIT** magazine. REF:T

Spectrum +3 manual £7, Multiface 128 hardly used £15 in box with instructions. Phone: 01255 (Clacton) 473224 anytime REF:F

Spectrum and Dragon games for sale. SAE for list. John, 78 Holtdale Avenue, LEEDS LS16 7SG REF:F

Alphacom 32 printer £15 + p&p. Multiface 3 £15. Datel Joystick interface £5. ZX81 16k Ram pack £5. Phone Eifion 01745 (Abergele) 332122 after 6pm. REF:L

* * * *

SINCLAIR SPECTRUM - WANTED

Original copy of Quicksilva's Zombie, Zombie for Spectrum £5 or under. Phone: 01255 (Clacton) 473224 anytime REF:F

AN ENHANCED BASIC wanted for a Spectrum +3. Write to RK Cann, 17, Sir Ivor Place, Dinas Powys, S Glam CF64 4QZ or Phone 01222 514484 REF:F

Does anyone have a +D or Disciple interface for sale? Oh, and I'd still like a Sinclair flat screen TV. Phone Eifion 01745 (Abergele) 332122 after 6pm. REF:L

WANTED FOR A SPECTRUM. Any old platform and ladder games. Also any second-hand SAM software. Write to: John Turner, 58, Burnside, PARBOLD, Lancs WN8 7PE REF:I

* * * *

The MISCELLANEOUS section of small adverts is on The Back Page of 8BIT.

Title	Size	Price	Frequency	Coverage
ADVENTURE PROBE	A5 56 pages	£2	Monthly	All machines

Very comprehensive coverage of all aspects of adventuring. For a sample copy send 6 25p stamps with your address to: Barbara Gibb, 52, Burford Road, LIVERPOOL, L16 6AQ

AMSTRAD ACTION Monthly CPC

AMSTRAD ACTION HAS NOW CLOSED - LAST ISSUE 117 (JUNE 1995)

CHR$(7) A5 4 pages Quarterly Mainly PCW

The newsletter of the Scotwest PCW Club. Brief artices and sales/wants lists on the back cover. David Williams, 32/34, Carfin Street, New Stevenston, MOTHERWELL ML1 4JL

COMMODORE CRACKER A5 £1.70 with disk Monthly? C64 + derivs

Available from: Brian Turner, 46a, Kent Avenue, ASHFORD, Kent TN24 8NQ.

COMMODORE FORMAT A4 24 pages £2.99 Monthly C64 + derivs#

Available through newsagents (but you may have to order it). Good C64 coverage from the professional to the homebrew. As well as keeping the games content, it seems to be turning more technical lately. Still the biggest and best national forum for Sales and Wants.

COMMODORE WORLD A4 58 pages £3.95 6weekly C64 + derivs

Newish US newsstand magazine. It now has a EBES cover disc. Subscription rate is £35 per year for 8 issues. Add 50p postage for a sample copy. Electric Boys Software, 917b, Brighton Road, PURLEY, Surrey CR8 2BP

CORNWALL PCW CLUB A5? 4 pages ? monthly PCW mainly

The Club's newsletter carries a two page article in each issue.

CPC USER A5 34 pages £1.33 Bi-monthly CPC#

The club magazine of the UAUG (United Amstrad User Group). Membership is £8 per annum. Articles are generally CPC-specific, including games, serious software, and hardware. The group also has an enormous PD library, including CP/M titles, which are available free (no copying charge) to members. Tony Baker, UAUG, 26, Uplands Crescent, FAREHAM, Hants PO16 7JY

THE DISC DRIVE A5 20 pages Quarterly Mainly PCW

The magazine of the South Essex PCW Club, and worth joining the Club for. Many problem-solving and other PCW user-related articles.

FORMAT A5 40 pages £1.50 Monthly Sam/Spectrum.

It claims to be the 'Home of Z80 Computing', but most of the content including the advertisements seems to be pretty Spectrum- and SAM-specific. However in the issue I saw, the two Z80 articles and the Easter-finding BASIC listing would interest owners of other 8-bit computers. Many supplier advertisements and readers' letters. Technical queries are answered. R Brenchley, 34, Bourton Road, GLOUCESTER, GL4 0LE

Title	Size	Price	Frequency	Coverage

LOCOSCRIPT USER PCW/Some PC#

LOCOSCRIPT USER IS NOW CLOSED

PCW PLUS A4 68 pages £2.99 Monthly PCW#

Available through newsagents (you may have to order it). PCW-centred, but some articles and advertisements are relevant to other 8-bit users, especially word processing and design-orientated uses rather than games. Also some CP/M coverage.

SIXTY-FOUR A5 32 pages £2 2/3-Monthly C64

Broad range of coverage from games to tech stuff. Several C64 adverts. Commodore Magic International, 5, Crane Avenue, Yaxley, PETERBOROUGH, Cambs, PE7 3JH

SPECTRUM UK A5 56 pages £1.50 Bi-Monthly Spectrum#

Exclusively Spectrum coverage of all variations and uses including PD, book reviews, games, adventures, fiction, problem solving, Forth, technical projects, etc. Many supplier and repairer adverts. Julie McQuillan, Spectrum UK, 28, Rockingham Drive, MELTON MOWBRAY, Leics LE13 0LQ. Cheques payable to: Miss J McQuillan.

WACCI A4 32 pages £1.50 Monthly CPC#

Longest-running(?) fanzine for CPC users. The readers' letters section each month answers a very wide range of queries and over the years almost all CPC serious software and peripherals have been reviewed in depth during the magazine's run. Mr Paul Dwerryhouse, **WACCI**, 7, Brunswood Green, Hawarden, Deeside CLWYD CH5 3JA

8BIT A4 20 pages £1.25 Bi-monthly All 8-bits

Sometimes accused of bias to one computer or another, the coverage of general 8-bit computing issues (including availability of 3" discs and other supplies, cross-format file exchanging, home publishing, PD libraries, E-mail and the Internet, emulators, 8-bit magazines etc) and the offer of a free small advertisement for all subscribers guarantees a steadily-rising readership. Now, what did you expect...?

# indicates the presence of advertisements for general supplies.

Please help the publishers and enclose *at least* the price of one magazine plus a stamped, self-addressed envelope **and an extra first class stamp** for each sample copy. Bear in mind that single-copy orders are more expensive to process by the suppliers.

I shall pleased to add to the above list, which be repeated in updated form from time to time. Please send me a review copy of any magazines I have missed which will be returned if required. Note that this section of **8BIT** is for *printed* magazine only (for now).

AMSTRAD USER

I recently received the Amstrad CPC disczine, **Amstrad User**. First impressions upon loading the menu (from which all other selections of the magazine load) are that it is very colourful - if you don't like it you can change it. There is the almost inevitable jolly tune bonging away and in various parts of the program three volume or pitch level bars twitch in sympathy. The music was good and I left it on for about 15 minutes but eventually it started to get on my nerves a bit (I'm a *delicate* ~~old~~ young fogey). You can turn the music off, but it's better to turn the music down as it comes back each time you return to the main menu. I found the menu selection a bit too precise, and would have preferred choosing from whole lines of text rather than blobs. An icon allows printing out of the text and artwork, but I have not used this option yet. There is a very nice rotating disc-flipping icon each time one needs to turn over the disc but this raises one criticism; is it neccesary to flip back to side A after every excursion to side B? Surely the menu could be on both sides?

I found an excellent piece by Malclom Dowse on coding Demos - very clear, even to a technoramous like me, and of course a lot of machine code programming has applications (with small modification) to other computers. There is some coverage of the Irish CPC Scene, a lot of good jokes and very funny stories. These are not usually computer-related, but they *are* very funny. There is an extensive and detailed 'Review' section as well as a good section on Z80 machine code matters. Full details of previous contents of **Amstrad User** are in the 'Back Issues' section. The overall impression is that there is a huge amount of really good material here to satisfy all levels of CPC enthusiast. As usual in fanzines of all sorts there are some rather 'unique' spellings and dodgy punctuation and spacing, which at times can get in the way of the flow of the very informative articles. The bad language content (frequently a topic of critics' and readers' interest) is pretty mild, with asterisks used judicially from time to time. It certainly doesn't get in the way and caused me no offence.

So - an extremely good-value disczine *and* they include some program files including the very wonderful B-ASIC and a couple of related files: for CPC+ users only but it's almost worth buying a Plus to see this program go; beautiful. I don't believe it's my place to give points or percentages but **Amstrad User** is a Real Good 'Un. You can get issues 2-7 from Brian Leahy, St Marys Road, Kingscourt, Co Cavan, Ireland for £1.15 each + a 3" disc and a label with your name and address on it. For issue 1 send <u>only</u> a 3" disc and the label - yes, number 1 is otherwise free.

COMMODORE WORLD

This is a real event: a new magazine for an 8-bit computer series of newsstand quality. It comes from America, where Commodores still have sufficient following and support for a publication like this. It boasts full-colour card covers, three column text on good paper, articles on everything from PD/Homebrew programs to GEOS (and programming for it), through just about any topic you could hope for on the way!

There are enough adverts from companies and individuals to make a C64/128 owner drool. It's perhaps a little light on pictures (*I* can talk!) but does include some diagrams and screen shots. It really is an accomplished publication, and I cannot recommend this highly enough to Commodore owners. **Commodore World** is imported every 6 weeks by Electric Boys ES, 917b, Brighton Road, PURLEY, Surrey CR8 2BP and cost £3.95 each, or £35 a year.

I don't know if *any* countries other than the USA and GB still have any newsstand 8-bit magazines now, but this launch is a breath of fresh air. With Commodore now back in business under new ownership, and talk of the C64 line being started up again for sale to Eastern Europe, things are definitely looking up for the C64.

ADVENTURE PROBE

This is a magazine for all computer users who are interested in adventures and puzzles, but with the bias on 'the 8-bits.' There is some coverage of Amigas and ST's, including an Amiga running a game through a Spectrum emulator and how it was done, and there's the odd reference to PCs, but mainly it's 8-bit all the way.

Although some adventures fall into the 'small publisher' or 'homebrew' categories, several of the larger commercial companies produced adventures, or games that could reasonably described as such, for several different computers. On top of its intelligent coverage of the subject without being stuffy, it is this that makes Adventure Probe such a good read. There are tips, solutions, and reviews squeezed into the 56 A5 pages and possibly the best bit, the readers' letters. I was pleasantly surprised to find these came from females as well as males (I'm not sure about Tinkerbell). So much for computing being seen as an all-male preserve.

I was surprised to see how many different games were covered, and even though I have never found the patience for computer adventuring, I did find myself warming to the subject as I read. If you are now feeling tempted to investigate this side of 8-bit computer use, give Adventure Probe a try, You will find it will point you in the direction of a game to suit your level of experience, or confidence. Adventure Probe is published monthly (how *does* she do it?) by Barbara Gibb, 52, Burford Road, LIVERPOOL L16 6AQ. For a sample copy send six 25p stamps with your address.

RADICAL SOFTWARE

This is the new address of Radical, from which we keep supporting the CPC. We now have a growing catalogue of exclusive games, and there are more on the way, such as the eagerly awaited Lethal Moves, and the improved Black Jack and Cribbage.
The latest additions are Megablasters (94% in AA), which comes on two discs, and the newly updated Routeplanner.

TITLE	PRICE
Who Said That	£13.95
Smart Plus*	£13.95
Megablasters	£13.95
Fluff*	£7.95
Routplanner	£19.95
Star Driver	£9.95
Masters Of Space	£9.95
Ball Bearing	£4.95

* Plus computers only.
All programs are available on 3" or 3.5" disc, please specify when ordering.
Prices include P&P.

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Brympton Cottage, Brunswick Road, Worthing,
West Sussex, BN11 3NQ.
Phone/Fax : 01903 206739

ADVENTURE PROBE

Adventure Probe

is an all-computers monthly magazine with 56 A5 pages crammed with readers letters, reviews of newly-released adventures, hints for old and new adventures, a 'getting you started' section to help with those frustratingly difficult beginnings, readers software for sale/wanted, computer and adventure related articles, a serialized solution in a walk-through style, advertisements for magazines & software houses, and many more interesting items.

£2.00 per issue (cheques/p.o. payable to Adventure Probe), All enquiries to:

Barbara Gibb (Editor)
Adventure Probe
52 Burford Rd,
Liverpool. L16 6AQ,
England, U.K.

THE magazine for ALL adventurers since June 1986

"TRACK" ITEMS-FOR-SALE ADVERTISING FEATURE by the SCOTWEST PCW CLUB

Compact MONEYWARE Daybook (8000 series, manuals) £15#1, DR CBasic Compiler (8000 manuals, programming) £10#1, Hisoft Pascal80 Compiler/Editor (8000 manual) £10#1, Fleet Street Editor Plus £15#1, Time and Magik Adventure Game £7#1, Masterpaint/Masterscan £25#2, Mini Office Word Proc/Comms £4.50#2, Loco 2 guide (Ian Sinclair) £1.50#2, Desk Top Publisher £15#2, Batman-Arcade game for PCW £7#3, Camsoft Payroll Master (8000) £8#3, HTB Computers pcw card+ designer for designing your own punch cards for knitting machines and a programme for designing your own embroidery patterns comp with book & orig disk#3, SCA Professional RS232 Interface £20#3, Reeltime £10#3, Miracle Modem WS4000 V21/23 £50#3, Colleen Payroll 8000 series £10#3, Newsdesk International (8000) £8#3, Companion Desk Organiser-Calc-Clock-Diary-Notepad £7#3, DR DRAW (Unused) £15#3, Template disc - Loco 2 for 9512 £6#3, 3½" discs each 40p#4, Planit organiser £10#5, Everyman Tait accounts £5#5, BACKUP - Dave's Disc Doctor system £10#5, Step by Step guide to Loco 1 £2#5, Loco 2.26 update £5#5, Turbo Cracker with extra manual £20#5, Basic Manual (Amstrad) £5#5, dbase 11 (full ring-bound manual) £10#6, Cornix CARDBOARD Dbase (inc manual) £5#6, 8000 Plus Issues 1-48 buyer collects or pays post £50#6, 8000/PCW Plus issues 49-96 as previous £50#6, Supercalc2 £20#7, 3" 720k disc drive £45#7, Time & Magik, Lancelot, Mindfighter, Brian Clough Football, Matchday II, Trivial Pursuit £6#7. No contact after 22.00, Buyer pays postage.

Contact number for items marked: #1=01324 632316, #2=01904 670151, #3=01685 874972, #4=01563 42838, #5=01698 732403, #6=01505 863916, #7=01132 755576

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1) PROPRINT - PROTEXT TEXT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM. MULTIPLE FONTS ETC. ALLOWS USERS TO DESIGN THEIR OWN FONTS WITH INBUILT FONT EDITOR. FOR ALL AMSTRAD CPC DISC MACHINES. DISC - £15.99 ROM - £24.99

2) MICRODESIGN PLUS - PAGE PROCESSING PACKAGE, CONSISTING OF TWO DISCS AND TWO MANUALS. MENU DRIVEN DTP SYSTEM, HIGH QUALITY PRINT OUTPUT. FOR ALL AMSTRAD CPC DISC MACHINES WITH 128K. £29.99

3) THE MAPS LIBRARIES FOR MICRODESIGN PLUS:

A) MAPS OF THE BRITISH ISLES - SIXTEEN HI-RES (256K STRIPS) MAPS OF THE COASTLINE, MOTORWAYS, CITIES ETC OF THE UK. ROMDOS D20 FORMAT - £11.99 3" FORMAT (2 DISCS) - £12.99

B) WORLD MAPS - FIFTEEN HI-RES MAPS OF THE EUROPE, AMERICA ETC. ROMDOS OR 3" FORMAT - £11.99

4) DESKTOP ENVIRONMENT SYSTEM - SOPHISTICATED CPC GUI, BASED ON WIMP ENVIRONMENT. FOR ALL AMSTRAD CPC DISC MACHINES. DISC - £14.99 ROMS (2) - £24.99

5) 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

6) PARADOS - SUPERB DISC OPERATING SYSTEM FOR USE WITH LARGE FORMAT 3.5" DRIVES. COMPATIBLE WITH & SUPERIOR TO ROMDOS. THIS IS THE ONLY ROM WHICH SHOULD BE INSERTED IN SLOT SEVEN THEREBY FREEING AN EXTRA SLOT FOR MORE SOFTWARE. £14.99

7) 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

8) SOFT-LOK V2.2 - COMPREHENSIVE TAPE TO DISC UTILITY, SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO TRANSFER SPEEDLOCK PROTECTED GAMES. £8.99

HOME PUBLISHING

There are many programs to help the would-be home publisher use an 8-bit computer accomplish the task, but most articles so far have dealt with either one particular program, or they assume one particular computer. This series is to look at the process from the very beginning and deal with general issues of style as well as the various options of production, on the basis that there is no point in publishing if the result looks unappealing to the target audience or costs too much to make it economically viable. After outlining some of the basics I will take some examples of home publishing through the various options of production to make the maximum impact. I will use plain English except where there appears no alternative to a technical term. I am very much obliged to Jon Sheffield for the benefit of his experience and input to the preparation of the article.

Before starting any home publishing job, certain principals of good practice need to be established to give the best chance of success in this, and future, projects.

1) Keeping Notes, and the Style Book:

Notes that can be easily understood later should be kept *right from the start.* Ideally this should be in a regularly-updated word processor file, with a paper version too which can be referred to (and amended on an interim basis) to as work progresses without dropping out of the publishing program. This should be bound into a lie-flat ringbinder. Initially, this will seem like a complete waste of good DTP-ing time, but as you proceed you will be building a record of your own standard settings, details of your 'House Style', and a tips handbook.

You should keep a detailed log of production costs as they occur, either in an account book or program which lets you to make fairly detailed entries. For example;

13/5/95 50 sheets of 80gsm copier WH Smith (offer-usually £3.99) £3.19
15/5/95 photocopying 30 page1/16 (dbl-sided A3) of issue 2 £2.10

Now not only do you know the date, origin and price of your paper, you know what grade you used, and can track likely increases in price over time. Your accounts summary records can also be derived from this log with a little forethought.

Rather than looking like the printed equivalent of a camel (a horse designed by a committee), your publications will each have a clear image and changes you make will be informed by your history. If you have followed 8BIT for more than one issue you will know I am not averse to change, but I always have a good reason for any change. This is, of course, open to the readers' opinion, but as the readership continues to increase, I must be doing *something* right. I transfer the 8BIT House Style and Notepad files onto each new issue's disc and add to them as new precedents come up. At least then, if/when I break the rules I know that I'm doing it.

2) House Style, an attempt at consistency:

As an example of 8BIT's house style at work, you will find I generally spell the things that go into computer drives 'discs' rather than 'disks'. However, If I am quoting another writer or publication where 'disks' has been used, that is the version I use, I wouldn't 'correct' it. That is according to *my* style book. The style book also contains my preferred spelling for 'program' if it refers to computers but 'programme' if it is referring to a radio or TV broadcast. I also note in the Page Parameters section, that I leave a line between paragraphs, inset tabs by 5 spaces and let the program's formatting decide whether there will be one or two spaces after punctuation. That way, I am consistantly inconsistant.

contd.....

I try to use exclamation marks very sparingly; some publications seem to be shouting at the reader all the time. For emphasis I generally use *italics*, with **bold** reserved for magazine names and as a contrast to an italicised section. If you are not confident about the use of English grammar, spelling and/or punctuation, get a book. Either buy one or get one out of your local library, but always use the *same* one, unless or until you find it is not helping you. In that case change to another one and stick to that. English is an evolving language, thank goodness, and unless you do something which offends more of your readers than it pleases, the question of style these days is largely up to you and your chosen reference book.

The use of swearing and 'bad language' is also up to you. If you've done your research you will know what your audience will expect, or tolerate. I have edited 'bad language' out of several pieces out of submissions to 8BIT, but I do feel that if used well and sparingly it can broaden the range of expressed emotion in language. The danger lies in repetition to the point of lack of expression.

3) Choosing and Using Text Styles:

The available choice of lettering styles (aka fonts) available to you will vary according to the program used, but it is accepted wisdom in the printing world that only font producers use more than three fonts on a page - size changes and serif/sans serif variations don't count, apparently. I would challenge this. It is inevitable that in a publication which incorporates artwork produced by others there will be clashes of typeface. An example of this is a block of cut-and-pasted small display advertisements sharing a page of editorial text. To an extent the editor is at the mercy of his contributors. However, an editor usually has control over the majority of his text and this is where he or she *can* exercise restraint.

The priority is to decide first of all on the typeface, or font, to be used for the main body of text. It should be clear, and large enough to be read after reproduction without incurring eyestrain in the reader. I shall return to this when I cover the advantages and disadvantages of the various page size options.

Headings should be either in an enhanced (eg bold, outlined or larger) version of the main typeface, or one which 'goes' with it. I have mentioned using serif and sans serif together. But this is where it is starting to get tricky as, although beauty is very much in the eye of the beholder, some combinations *do* work better than others. If you are uncertain whether typefaces complement each other, seek other opinions through the specific press for your computer or stay with the simple 'enhanced' options if you can.

If you need sub-headings, or insets (eg tables of figures), these are cases for your style book too once you have found something that works for you. You will see I have used numbered paragraphs in the same font to sub-divide this article. If further sub-divisions are found to be necessary as the series proceeds I could use a, b, c, d or i, ii, iii, iv etc to assist clarity.

4) Decide what your audience/market will be:

Is there is an audience for your publication, such as an existing common-interest group. Do the local camera club (for instance) want a newsletter which you could provide? Is your target group adequately served already, and *do you care*? If this venture is primarily for your satisfaction, then it may not matter - there's no shame and a lot of satisfaction to be got from so-called 'vanity' publishing. But do some market research if you can so that you know whether you will have a receptive audience, and also try to ascertain what they might pay for your work. At least you will then have some rough figures on which to base your production budget.

Next issue will cover the various production options for home publishing in terms of time, cost and quality of the finished product.

VERY ATTRACTIVE SHORTS

A letter from Max Sturgess in New Zealand bemoans the lack of Amstrad or dealer support in the antipodes. 'PCs and Asia rule', it seems. Also, he says importing from the UK is very expensive, due to the exchange rates, EC, tax, postage etc. I suggested to him buying kit second-hand from the UK, as that may minimise some of the problems, but I am not sure of the tax situation. I have bought from France without difficulty using my VISA, but that's with us and them both in the EC. I knew it was good for something. 8BIT now has 10 overseas readers who, I suppose, all suffer in the same way.

Perhaps an exchange scheme for software might be viable. Can anybody advise on the legality of such a thing?

Max also mentions his Amswells (Amstrad and Wellington) & Capital A5 newsletter and is sending one to me. When I get it I'll add it to the magazines list and you can drop him a line if you wish. His Capital Computer Club also covers other (whisper it softly: "DOS") computers as well as PCWs. See the small ads this issue for the address.

Good new for C64 users: RETROS is a brand new company producing software for the C64. Apparently, they have the following due for release in early 1995: Cannon Fodder, Rebash Flash and Yellow Mac V - Glynis Goes to Town. For a copy of their first compilation, The Magnificent Six, send a cheque or PO for £1.99 made payable to Matthew Withers to: Matthew Withers, RETROS, 209, Ruskin Road, CREWE, Cheshire CW2 7JY

I am usually fairly useless at computer problem-solving, but I may be able to help two readers who have found themselves apologising this month for using either a hash sign (#) or a capital L instead of a £ for a pound sign. Since almost all printers sold here have an English (as well as American) character set including a £ built in, it is only a question of finding out how to be able to use it with a particular program on a particular computer.

This generally involves changing small switches which are inside the printer somewhere - hidden, but just about accessible usually. Check your printer handbook first or try a (free) small advertisement in 8BIT.

Plan 'B' involves either using a set-up procedure for a particular program or, if that fails, doctoring your disc. This last is not for the faint-hearted and should not be tackled unless you are prepared to risk spoiling the disc, and always use a back-up copy if possible.

John Walker of the Cornwall PCW Club writes to follow up the pieces on transferring files from CPC to PCW format discs. He uses a PCW 8512 with Locoscript 3 and a CPC 6128+ with Protext and this presents no problems.

The PCW accepts CPC 6128 3" discs in the A drive, and ASCII files can be INSERTed into Locoscript documents without difficulty, apart from the different justification (line length).

Locoscript ASCII files can be read to CPC formatted discs then loaded into Protext from drive A. John uses Moonstone's 2in1 occasionally for file transfers and, as long as a CPC format disc is used, there are no problems.

Now, has anyone experience of conversions between the two with the various 3½" formats? I have a PCW 3½" disc with ASCII files on it and I cannot read them by any of my CPC file converters. Assuming the disc and files are OK, what am I doing wrong?

Unfortunately, space constraints due to minor last minute production hiccups mean I have to hold over a lengthy piece of correspondence between Russ Michaels of EBES and myself. As this concerns matters of great importance and relevance to all 8-Bit users I will publish it in full next issue. Also a feature on the chequered history of Bonzo, and the last parts of the "I've got a C64/128..." and "Best PD for the CPC" series. I suppose I should be glad I'm not short of copy...

MISCELLANEOUS SMALL ADVERTS

Books with details of use for Spectrum, ZX81, Apple, TRS-80, VIC & PET: Practical Things to do with a Microcomputer £1, Computer Battlegames £1, Computer Spacegames £1. All incl p&p. BA Watson, c/o 8BIT magazine. REF:T

MERLINE-SERVE. Buying, selling, and swapping CPC, PCW, Spectrum bits, PC, Apricot, Games Consoles. Send A5 SSAE: Merline-Serve, *Brympton Cottage*, Brunswick Road, WORTHING, Sussex BN11 3NQ. REF:F

APPLE IIE with loads of spares incl. service manuals (massive), and cards, discs, motherboard, etc. Write to: Mr N Woodbridge, 30, Hospital Street, NANTWICH, Cheshire CW5 5RP or phone 01270 628979 REF:T

Atari 800XL. Mint, 2 disc drives, Datacorder, loads of discs, plus spare keyboard. £40. Mr N Woodbridge, 30, Hospital Street, NANTWICH, Cheshire CW5 5RP. 01270 628979 REF:T

I have just bought a ZX81 with 16k RAM pack. Can you supply an address of a user group, fanzines etc Duncan Tizzard, Folly Farm, Cold Ashton, CHIPPENHAM, Wilts. SN14 8JR Tel: 01225 (BATH) 891014 between 7 and 9pm REF:Q

Wanted: old computers for private collection - full set-ups preferred. Manual for Amstrad PC1512 wanted. Also Dragon games wanted and Dragon 32 for sale. £20 + post. John, 78, Holtdale Avenue, LEEDS LS16 7SG. 01132 (LEEDS) 671393 REF:F

BBC WANTED: Does anyone know of a BBC Computer User group?: Write to Mr AJ Howard, 65, Altyre Way, BECKENHAM, Kent BR3 3ED (and 8BIT) REF:F

APPLE II COMPUTER, also an Apple II monitor plus manual. Offers Please phone John 01929 554109 REF:L

WANTED: A SHEET FEEDER for a Canon BJ10ex printer. If you can help please telephone: 01202 876807 REF:F

BBC WANTED: "The L Game", a text + maths adventure for the BBC series of computers. I will pay £5. Rob Watson, "Harrowden", 39, High Street, Sutton, ELY, Cambs. CB6 2RA or any evening you can telephone: 01353 777006 REF:L

THE NOTICEBOARD

Leon Bebbington is setting up a disk magazine for the Commodore C64, to be sold by **Commodore Magic**. Issue 4 of Leon's existing (paper) magazine **64** is nearly ready. Further details from: Leon Bebbington, 348, Station Road, WINSFORD, Cheshire CW7 3DG

THE INDEPENDENT 8-BIT ASSOCIATION (IEBA) has been suspended with the closure of **ZAT** magazine. Darren Blackburn now has a full-time job which precludes some of his former activities. However, David Ledbury editor of **SAM PRIME** is hoping to relaunch ZAT in some form. For more information or offers of help write to **SAM PRIME** c/o David at 19, Lyme Avenue, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 7RS, or telephone: 01625 617262 Enclose an SSAE for your reply.

I have just heard from Bill Denby at Oxfam that the Weybridge and Esher Oxfam shops are now no longer the preferred outlets for selling-on any computer equipment donated to them. Apparently, this is due to a central policy change and may result in 8-bit kit turning up almost anywhere for resale. All electrical equipment sold through their shops is checked for safety and their prices are often very competitive. Give them a look in your area.

I have just received a copy of the latest catalogue from **Merline-Serve**. It is mainly for CPC users, but there are also some Spectrum, PCW, Apricot, Games Console and PC items, and even a book for the Dragon 32. 3" discs are, of course, of more general interest to most 8-bit computer users and there are other consumables too. For your copy of the catalogue send two 25p stamps to to: Angela Cook at **Merline-Serve**, *Brympton Cottage*, Brunswick Road, WORTHING, Sussex BN11 3NQ.

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COMING SOON TO 8BIT

Genealogical information recording on the cheap (including family trees back to great^6 grandparents, 'Magic Eye' 3-D pictures created on an 8-bit, around the Clubs - national and local, current 8-bit computing around the world, using your inkjet to the full, inter-computer, file transfers the latest generation of emulators, more Weird Wired World telecommunication leaks and silliness, Faxing with an 8-bit, detailed special features on Spectrums and PCWs in the "I've got a..." series, more Internet/E-mail stuff, the long-awaited readers' survey (next issue, I promise), and readers' letters, but only if you send any which are suitable for publication - all contributions welcome. Maybe even a 'Which 8-bit is best for...?' series. Now *that* could be controversial.

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THE LEGAL STUFF

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While the advertising section is the best place for appeals for (or offers of) help, I would like to publish any letters which seem to have a general relevance. I will assume that permission to publish is implied with any letter received unless otherwise stated.

All facts and information in 8BIT are published on the basis that they are believed true at the time of publication. No liability can be accepted by Brian Watson or other contributors for any loss or damage to subscribers software of equipment, however caused. So mind how you go, *I'm* doing my best! I am careful to try to supply a realistic value to any hunch, belief, opinion, rumour or fact. But clangers can still happen. So, "Sorry, and please tell me if/when it happens so that I can set the record straight."

COMMODORE MAGIC

Dedicated to supporting the C64 and it's User

5 Crane Avenue, Yaxley, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE7 3JH

Telephone: (01733) 245554 between 6pm & 7pm - UK Time

Aye! Aye! That's yer lot. See you at the beginning of August.