

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

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**CHRISTMAS WILL SOON BE
UPON US SO WACCI WISHES
YOU A VERY HAPPY
CHRISTMAS AND A
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR**

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THE BENEFITS OF WACCI MEMBERSHIP

- * The best magazine for serious CPC users.
- * An INDEX of the above from issue 1 - 87.
- * Telephone HELPLINE (indispensable).
- * Bargain buys/wanted lists from the MARKET STALL.
- * Discount off goods from advertisers.
- * List of PD discs, tapes, library books, services.
- * Above all the advice, assistance and friendship from other WACCI members.

BENEFIT list by Ernie Ruddick, December 1994

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WACCI: The club for Amstrad CPC computer owners.

FRONT COVER: Paul Dwerryhouse.

THE TELEPHONE HELP-LINE

BOB MOFFATT, 01994 453509, Pendine, Carmarthen.
Masterfile III, Mastercalc, Qualitas & Protext.

FRANK FROST, 01983 882197, Isle of Wight
4pm to 10pm, VDE, CP/M and Protext.

PETER CAMPBELL, 0141 554 4735, Glasgow, OCP Art Studio, Vidi, Basic, MicroDesign & Art Programs, ProPrint, CPC plus m/cs and VideoMaster.

MALCOLM BRABBIN, 0152 716344, Suffolk
8pm to 11pm but not Saturdays. Basic programming.

IAN NEILL, 01926 337708, 6pm to 10pm, Warwickshire
Eprom blowing, Hardware, Electronics and more.

MARK STEWART, 01773 822599, Belper, 8pm to 10pm,
PAW Adventure Creator, Basic and general help.

NIGEL MELLS, 01784 250763, Ashford, Tape to disc problems, Basic programming and a general natter.

MIKE LYONS, 01942 259942, Wigan, Basic, Stop Press Dk'tronics Speech Synth and help with Dawn.

STUART GASCOIGNE, 0272 831361, Bristol, Basic, Machine code, PD Discs 19 to 36.

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

JOHN BOWLEY, 01733 260616, Peterborough.
Help and advice about the Book/PD Libraries.

CLIVE JACKSON, Cobol, Basic, Bankman, Sorting, File Handling and Applications programming.
37 Essex Road, Stamford, Lincs, PE9 1LG

NIGEL CALLCUTT, -----, Melton Mowbray.
Out of action for the time being.
Tues & Wed: 7pm-11pm - Thurs to Mon: 9pm-11pm

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

PHILIP DIRICHLEAU, 01522 511608
Powerpage 128, Gpaint, Tasword, Disc'o'Magic, PD Utilities, Basic programming, the Star LC10 and Epson LX printers. 6pm 'til midnight.

NIC RAYNER, 0850 992747 (mobile) Manchester.
CPC Emulators on the PC.

NB:

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

WACCI

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Owned by: *The Club Members*

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By: *Jeff Walker*
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Hi everyone, welcome to the ever changing look of WACCI. It would have changed even more if my 8bit printer port had not given up the ghost. Well I say my 8bit port but in fact it wasn't the KDS port but my printer cable. I only found out after John Bowley sent me the Goldmark 8bit port which comes complete with cable. My thanks go to John and Andre Howard for helping me sort the problem and everyone else who had to put up with me ranting on about it....

THE COST OF LIFE

Please don't read too much into this but, as there is a Budget just round the corner, I thought I'd lay some costing on you to show the production costs of the magazine. Why do I fear the budget, well Ken Clarke could put VAT on magazines and that would affect little old WACCI a lot.

Let's have a look at the production costs of last months magazine and, whilst it had some extras that don't normally appear, it does illustrate my fears about VAT.

printing:	306
labels + envelopes:	15
postage:	154

total:	£475
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THE REVENUE

WACCI had 365 members at the time the last issue was posted out and most are UK based so to simplify matters the revenue is:

$365 \times 1.50 = £547.50$

And that equals a Profit of £72.50

THE FULL STORY?

Well no, as we spent £15 on black and white films for the convention, £20 developing and printing them, and £15 extra to Prontaprint for screening the photographs for inclusion in the magazine. That little lot adds up another £50 which puts the profit down to £22.50. I use a £10 ink cartridge for the Epson printer on average once a month so you can see things are running close to the bone last month.

The reason that WACCI survives is simple - we must make a little profit on everything we do. That way we can plough back the profits into the club for things like the Supplement and Index, as well as printers for producing the magazine on.

VAT RULES OK?

Let's forget the extra cost of the Convention and take the £475 figure for production of the magazine. Of that £306 prints the magazine. Put 17.5% VAT on that and that equals an extra £53.55, which means a profit of approx £20, which means no latitude whatsoever.

What does this all mean? Well if you read/saw Ken Clarke put VAT on magazines then WACCI will have to go up in price.

If Ken Clarke left us alone then WACCI will continue at £1.50 for the foreseeable future. Yours views are always welcome as I have to take decisions that affect your club.

HELP NEEDED - ONE

Andre Howard remembers that, at an All Format Fair in London, a member offered Clive help in preparing Hitech C help files prior to placing it in the PD library. Andre would like to know if it was you and where is the project up to, or, do you know anything about the project. Please let us know via WACCI HQ.

HELP NEEDED - TWO

Peter Campbell wants help with converting PD clip art from MDA format to DR format for the WACCI PD library. If you have loads of time (really I mean that) and a 3.5" drive that supports D20 Romdos format and MicroDesign Plus then contact Peter direct to offer your services.

WELCOME BACK ALAN

Allan Tilling is back in harness this month with VbB. WACCI didn't look the same without him, it's funny how you have to miss something to really value it - if you follow my drift.

AND FINALLY...

Can I ask all contributors to the magazine to note the copy date for next month. To meet deadlines I must print it before Christmas so your help is needed - thanks in advance -Paul.

*With: John and Carol Bowley
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<<Carol>>

Fair Comment

Philip DIRICHLEAU
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WACCI TO THE RESCUE - THANKS RAY

Dear Philip, May I please use the Fair Comment columns to send out a bouquet to a member? One Wednesday evening in late October, youngest son (star? of A Work Experience) rang to say that his disc drive was not reading a disc. The disc contained a file which he required to use for a presentation the next day. The symptoms he described were typical of the now notorious drive belt problem.

I didn't fancy the 4 hour drive from Pendine to Coventry to help solve the problem and so made a few phone calls (including one to your good self). It turned out that Ray Neal lives only 2 miles from youngest son and he most kindly agreed that is Alexander (for that is youngest son's name - his cover is now blown) delivered the disc, he wound print it out for him.

Within 2 hours of the first phone call Alexander was clutching a printout of his precious file. This would have been impossible without the kind co-operation of Ray and his wife. Thanks a lot Ray, I really am most grateful.

Bob Moffatt
Pendine

<<Wasn't it wonderful, Bob, the way that all came together so well. I would also like to thank Ray for his help. It's acts of mercy like that which prove that WACCI is, indeed, far more than 32 pages of print each month -Philip>>

THAT FOUNDATION THING AGAIN

Dear Philip, this time I am really, really going to do it. Write to Fair Comment that is. My favourite magazine has just arrived - the alsatian has punctured it in several places after wrestling it from the postman's fingers - I have read it through and through and my brain is now seething with comments and reactions. (This MUST be the sign of a good magazine). What I would usually do at this stage is to put it aside and maybe write a few lines straight away and save them

to disc for the rest of my missive to be written later. Of course later becomes still later and even later still and waddyaknow the next issue is now being savaged by the dog and there are more letters and articles to read and ponder. But not this time - I shall not arise from this keyboard until my ramblings have been turned into electronic thingys -(how strange that I failed Physics O Level).

Firstly Philip I must take issue with your brief comment about Brunword at the end of Richard Latham's letter. " ..quite a decent WP when you finally get used to it" you said. Talk about damning with faint praise! I would probably say the same about Protext but I've never liked it enough to want to get used to it. I expect the fans of both programmes could go on all night about the relative merits and never agree ...it must be good news for CPC users to have two such excellent products available. But please don't dismiss Brunword as second in quality to Protext. I've used Brunword disc, Protext disc and currently Brunword Mk2 on ROM. For my money Brunword outclasses Protext and the Brunword ROM must be undisputed champion for it's handling of a full WP programme, instant spellcheck AND a fully integrated Database all available at the same time and you do NOT need a Rombox. How do they do that? O.K., O.K., no more I promise. I'll start a Brunword Appreciation Society instead. Do Brunning Software not want to advertise in WACCI?

To my eternal regret I didn't make it to Walsall this year but I shall for once risk crossing the border into England for Dave Stitson's South West get-together in Plymouth. My letter is on the way to you Dave with a request that nobody tries to have a technical discussion with me. (See Physics above). I love my CPC for what it can do - I don't really want to know how it does it. I always read the techy articles and sometimes think- "One day I'll try that" - but deep down I know that in my hands such meddling would

lead only to meltdown of either software or hardware and many tears before bedtime.

Thinking technical for just one more moment, either my two typing fingers are getting stiff or my keyboard action is getting awfully sticky. I seem to remember seeing a letter from a reader of WACCI or AA who said you could safely lever off each key and clean out the dust and mouldy cheese rolls etc from under them. Has anyone tried this with good results?

Paul Hollinshead was enquiring about the Foundation Step Time Sequencer. This was mentioned in two Amstrad Action music features in October and November 1992. The price was either £25 or £35 (depending on which page you looked at) disc only and unique apparently. Foundation Software was the source with a phone number given of 0279 -725788. There's an article by Adam Peters about using it and even a covertape with a 2 minute sample on it. If Paul Hollinshead gets in touch he's welcome to have the articles and tape.

Good Heavens, this is Page 2. Sorry to have rattled on so Philip -please use the censor's pen at will.

And finally - I was browsing through old AA's and came across a strange mystery in the FEB'95 issue. There's a picture of this chap Arthur Cook - WACCI Tape Librarian no less - looking young and vigorous, full head of hair etc. Yet a price list behind him is in shillings and pence! Is this photo perhaps 25 years old and supplied by King Arthur's Publicity Department? These questions should be answered - WACCI readers have the right to know the truth.

Keep up the good work Philip - FC is really excellent under your editorship.

Patrick Hanlan
Cornwall

<<I hope I haven't upset you Patrick, with my comment about Brunword, but I do stand by it. Sorry. I have tried Brunword and I didn't like it at all.

I'm not saying that it isn't a good Word Processor, if it was rubbish it wouldn't sell as well, all I am saying is that it does take quite a while to work out the highly non standard controls.

Keyboard cleaning! Don't just prise the keys off. It can be done but it's also a great way of causing them some serious damage. Try hovering the keyboard with the bit that it used to get into corners and then clean it with furniture polish and a shaving brush (Yes, I am being serious). If it's still sticking, then I'm afraid it's a dismantle job.

I'm going to stay out of any comments about Foundation Step Time Sequencers, since I still have no idea what the earth that object is, or what it does. Sounds like something that Issac Asimov would have written about. Strange name.

It would be so easy to make a comment about dear old Arthur, so I will. He's been around since the dawn of time itself, skulking around the world and replacing damaged body parts with electronic equipment. As they say in his parts, he's more machine now than man, twisted and evil.

I'm now in very deep trouble from Arthur (I hope). Ha! Vengeance is sweet isn't it? -Philip>>

FLIP'S A VERY CROSS STITCH

Dear Flip (WHO! -P), A while ago there was some interest in a program for designing cross stitch patterns. A CPM commercial package was available which was about as much use a Rolex to a goldfish. My evil twin brother put together a short demo version of X-Stitch which our very own Angie Hardwick loved. Of course it fell to me to finish things off which I have now done.

It fits into 64k with four 55x60 size patterns, a function for designing symbols, printing, on screen key, block facilities like copying, flipping and a rotate routine that was really, really difficult to write. Still, these things are sent to try us...

I have also been writing a little program for designing small pictures and loading, saving & printing. The main function is saving as a file that loads into Protext. It does this by converting the picture into binary

then string\$ of numbers and saving the lot as an ascii file. The file can be easily MERGED into Protext documents to create a small letterhead, personalise stationary, create a logo, etc. I was hoping to make it compatible with Mini Office but John Hudson informed me it won't load ascii files. If anyone has any theories on this please get in touch. However, there is a function in my program to print the numbers needed so they can be typed in.

If anyone wants a copy of either program send me an 8cm disc, 9cm disc or even tape and I'll be happy to supply them. They are both public domain. Could you be so kind as to make sure my full address gets on the end of this letter. Thanks.

That's about it. Thanks for your time. I'm off to give my evil twin brother a black eye. Have a nice day.

Yours

Richard Narain
182 Vaughan Road
West Harrow
Middlesex
HA1 4EB

<<Hi Richard. I have this Evil Twin Brother as well. He writes all those Fair Comment answers that no one likes and makes me unpopular. I wish someone would black his eye for me.

Just a cotton picken' minute here. What's all this 8cm and 9cm discs stuff lurking around. I do hope your evil twin wrote that bit. Pah!

I've looked at the disc you sent me with the X-STITCH program on it and I have to admit that I am much impressed. It looks exactly like this sort of thing that was called for. The problem here is, how do I test it out fully without giving away my secret. I actually do Cross-Stitch at times and I enjoy it. OOpppps, think I've just dropped myself in it here. Oh well. I'll let you know better what I think when I've used it to design something specific. Thanks a lot and well implemented. -Philip>>

THE 100 DEBATE CONTINUES

Dear Philip, I have just finished reading Fair Comment in the issue that arrived this morning (no. 94) and one or two things spring to mind as a sort of contribution to a few debates. Firstly the 100th issue suggestions

called for by Paul and brought back to life by Ernie Ruddick.

I think I suggested to you on the telephone a week or two ago that it would be a real disaster if the mountain of commercial software produced for the CPC were to vanish without trace. You told me that Ocean had destroyed all their masters of CPC software, for instance. I wonder what the art world would say if it transpired that one of the greats of the past (Da Vinci, Van Gogh, one of them) had chucked a few hundred of their best efforts into a furnace because they'd moved from one medium (say water-colour) to another (say oils). Maybe connoisseurs from the next century will judge Ocean and other software houses that behave in such an odd way. But what's that got to do with the 100th issue?

Well, a huge amount of software exists in the form of original masters and is of absolutely no commercial value to its owners, the software houses in some cases and the programmers in others. Long-discontinued titles of both serious and leisure software will probably never earn another penny for them. But because software is no longer earning for its owners doesn't make it worthless. Now, in additional support of what I'm about to suggest, many of the programmers of that software cut their teeth on the CPC and the experience they gained equipped them for any success on other machines they may have subsequently had.

So how about asking them to donate some of it, maybe a great deal of it, to us? Either into the Public Domain or to a special almost-pd library set up for the purpose? What would be wrong with that? Especially if the new owner of the copyright undertook not to make a huge profit from the material?

Then we could have Ernie Ruddock's 100th issue cover-disc, and it could be a quality affair, a class game (I'd love to see Thrust again - I've had a couple of copies on tape but they were Firebird and soon lost their loadability) - and a serious gem, maybe a WP (I once had a copy of Word Perfect for the CPC, primitive by Protext standards but capable of handling huge files and adaptable to columns if you're prepared to

sacrifice some editing features). And because there's six months between now and No 100 those who haven't got a second 3.5 inch drive might be encouraged to buy one. That would mean the majority (if not all) of the membership would require this cover-disc on 3.5 inch format, which is certainly less expensive.

But first the software houses must be asked to see the light, to understand that they are custodians of one of the major art-forms of the latter part of the 20th Century, and if they were to consign all that material to the furnaces then the future may well judge them and find them wanting. It would, if they agreed, fall upon our shoulders to ensure that for as long as a CPC can still be powered up there is a disc or a tape to feed it.

Another point, separate from issue 100. I've written twice to the publisher of the late unlamented Amstrad Action on the subject of two of the covertapes during the last eight months of their disastrous publishing - the Crossword Compiler that wouldn't do anything and North and South which my 6128 couldn't make head or tail of. You know, he hasn't even so much as replied, and all I wanted was a listing, maybe, a poke or whatever, that I and those like me could type in and get the programs to do something. I might get in touch with his local Office of Fair Trading because that last eight months was unfair trading on a larcenous scale. It sticks in my throat, it does, the way I stayed with them to the bitter end, and that's all the respect I got for it. I will never ever buy a Future magazine again, not even if I want to learn cross-stitching.

Finally, I seem to have started something with my nostalgic meanderings in the last letter of mine to be published, and I'm really glad to see Isobel wanting to collate such memories. I never had one of Sinclairs first efforts, the ZX80 with its 1k ram, I think. But that was the beginnings of the Age of Wonders, that and that incredible piece of kit, the pocket calculator circa the same time with its LED display and four functions, no memory, wait until next year for that. Oh, and the early digital watches, again LED (press a

button for the time and fit a new battery every six weeks). All these pre-date our CPCs and are just as magical in their own ways. Let's include them, eh? Maybe I'd have been a mathematical wizard instead of a dullard had calculators been available when I was a kid. I never could get my head round the slide rule, but a pocket calculator ... that's a cinch!

If I can be any help in the above matters I'm always willing. I've grown absurdly fond of WACCI, you know. Silly, really.

Regards
Peter Rogerson
Mansfield Woodhouse

<<Hello again Peter. I think it's disgusting that software houses are destroying software so much now. I've been informed that Ocean are not the only group who have taken this drastic step (I just hope my information is correct now I've put it in print). It wouldn't cost them anything, nor would they lose anything, to let us have the software now.

I do wish Future would get their act together. To some people they're quite pleasant, but other's they treat so badly that I'm not surprised that some of us are starting to veto their publications altogether.

There is nothing silly about getting fond of WACCI. Some us have to be absurdly fond of her, or we'd scream very loudly and give up as a complete mental wreck, especially when we find ourselves getting close to publication date and eight letters suddenly drop through the door -Philip>>

TWO LETTERS AS ONE (NEW CRAZE?)

Dear Philip, first of all, welcome to Fair Comment. I know you've been at it for a couple of months now but that's only a short time isn't it?

Because I am relatively new to WACCI I'm not really sure of the procedure for letters so I have sent this on a disc saved as 1) a standard PROTEXT file and 2) as an ASCII file, as well as printed; perhaps you could give us newcomers an idiot's guide to club protocol e.g. postage costs etc.

I must admit I enjoy being a member of the club, albeit a passive one, as Bob Hoskins could have said "It's good to be in touch". I have already taken advantage of the PD library and even

sent off to Frank for back issues, I will be sending for more today. One of the things I like the most is the prompt response times from everybody involved, I can't be the only one who hates waiting weeks for things to arrive.

Right, that's the fawning over with, now for some business. First of all I must tell any members living in the Plymouth area of the bargain I picked up this weekend. I was just nosing about in a Government surplus store when I saw what I had been looking for for ages, a CTM 644 colour monitor, or to be more precise, four of them. "How much?" says I. "Thirty quid" says he "including the computer". What I hadn't noticed was the four 6128s laying on another table. Quick as a flash he had the required dosh and I left in a state of excitement. When I got home I had to spend about fifteen minutes cleaning them up but when I plugged it all in no problems. So I have now got a spare 6128 to back up my expanded 464 which is my preferred machine. So any local members who fancy what I consider to be a good deal, get down to Knight's Government Surplus stores at Mutton Cove (upstairs).

The next bit is for Paul really. I use Lbase to prepare all my address labels but I have a problem. I typed it in from good old AA and just to demonstrate my staggering intelligence have only just realised that it was written by Paul. The problem is when I save a file then reload it the name disappears from the first record and the name from record two appears in the post code of record one, with a subsequent knock on effect. I have checked the program against the listing and can find no differences so can anybody help please.

As I mentioned previously, my set up is an expanded 464. As you all know this machine requires a good deal of chaining on the expansion port to support all the required peripherals, in my case a memory pack, multiface, speech synth/sound amplifier and the disc interface, all of which put strain on each other. Now, I remember seeing an advert in early AAs for an expansion port splitter and was wondering if either these are still available anywhere or if anyone has one to spare or if indeed anybody has

the ability to make one for me, I will obviously reimburse anyone who can.

Well many thanks to all for bothering to read these ramblings, let's keep the club alive. I'm just sorry that my only input is the odd letter here and there. Best wishes

Andy Moreton
Plymouth

<<hold it a minute all. I'm not going to answer this just yet because I've just received another letter from Andy. In fact, here it is -Philip>>

Dear Philip, first of all very many thanks for the prompt return of my disc. I have to admit to being well confused by the Doncaster postmark though.

I received WACCI #94 this morning and this, combined with the back issues I ordered from Frank, pretty much answers my questions about the correct procedures for sending letters for publication so maybe you can edit that out, unless of course other members need educating. You will find enclosed a 1st class stamp to repay your postage costs, I meant to include one last time but forgot, SORRY.

It was good to read that the convention was such a success and judging from Angela's report you are quite a character. I hope there is another one next year so that I can make up for my non-attendance. I will definitely be going to the one Dave Stitson is organising in Plymouth.

I'm pleased to see you are imposing yourself on the Fair Comment pages, keep up the good work, best wishes

Andy Moreton
Plymouth

<<You know Andy, I just love educating people, or, as the Badger said to Mole and Ratty, 'we don't want to teach 'em, we wanna learn 'em'.

So, here goes. If you send a disc to me, it does make my life a lot easier if you do enclose a print out at the same time. To be honest, a lot of the disc letters I receive do include a print out and it does make it a lot easier to come up with at least a semi sensible response.

Return postage is not vital, but if you don't want to bankrupt me, it would come in handy. Thanks ever so, by the way Andy, for the stamp.

As for returning discs. Now, this takes a little thought. If you have a corrupt 3 inch disc that'll at least hold the file, then send that if you don't want it returning. As for 3.5 inch discs, note the cost of these ones. You can get them for considerably less than the 25p return postage cost. It wouldn't make sense to return them at that price, I hope.

I've never even heard of LBASE I'm afraid, but I'm sure Paul will remember it, so, I'll try and get a response out of him over it. HEY! PAUL, PUT DOWN THAT BUDWEISER AND ANSWER ANDY'S QUERY WILL YOU.

<<No need to shout so loud and as it happens, I'm not a great fan of American beers. I do remember a small error in the listing that appeared in AA. Either send me the program to modify for you or get it out of the Public Domain Library - it's on PD disc 74 available from Ian Parker. Take care. -Paul>>

As for being quite a character, well, not entirely accurate. I'm the original character, they broke the mould after I was born. My mum still calls me Dill, after the dog on the Herb Garden, and I've got two children of my own now. Mothers! -Philip>>

MR VERY LARGE ROMBOX DESIGNER

Dear Philip, I'm afraid this is going to be a bit long, and at times it could be a bit technical, so bear with me for a moment. I would like to respond to James Gall's letter in the latest WACCI regarding PARADOS and Romboxes. Also, I know what the problem is with the Maplin Romboard with regards to PARADOS not working.

(1) PARADOS - The internal Disk ROM in the earlier CPC's cannot be disabled. This is because the circuit drives the ROMDIS signal via a diode with cannot be reverse biased. External Romboxes also drive this signal to disable any slot except for slot 7 (because of this internal diode). Therefore fitting PARADOS in an external ROM slot 7 without disabling the internal ROM will have a number of effects.

Firstly, both ROMs will be enabled at the same time, irrespective of the Rombox design. This will cause contention with both ROMs trying to drive the data bus. If this condition persists, both ROMs could be damaged

in the long term - not a recommended practise.

Secondly, which ROM is visible when interrogated is open to question. If one has a better drive capability, it will be visible. If both are the same, a logic low (0) will override a logic high (1). The distance of the ROMs from the processor could affect the result.

For instance, on my prototype Romboard design which used no cable and therefore PARADOS was as close to the processor as the internal ROM, PARADOS signed on. On the final design, with 5 inches of ribbon cable in the way, the CPM ROM signed on.

(2) ROMBOARDS - I find it insulting the James would suggest that I would copy somebody elses design and sell it via Campursoft commercially.

Firstly, the Campursoft Romboard is 8 or 16 slots, not 15. It was incorrectly advertised as being 15.

Secondly, the only Romboards I have seen were a ROMBO and a John Morrison 4-slot. I only saw these after my design was complete.

Thirdly, my design was based on the PD version Peter distributes for me. This had a number of modifications due to faults being found before being issued.

I have been working as an electronics design engineer for 9 years having gained a degree. My design is based upon this experience and my knowledge of the CPC. I hope James withdraws his "accusation" and sends in an apology to WACCI.

(3) Maplin Romboard - The problem with this design (and also the Arnor AD2 plus expansion board) is that data bus bits 3 to 8 are not decoded for the ROM select number. This means that ROM 1 for example will sign on in slot 1, 9, 17, 25, etc.

With some ROMs, this is not a problem because the internal code takes care of this. PROTEXT, MAXAM 1.5 and the CPM ROM are typical examples. For other ROMs, there is no such code and therefore this is a problem. PARADOS, PROMERGE+ and DES are typical examples. With these, different faults could be apparent. In the case of PARADOS, the machine continually resets. I can give people the modification if requested or do an article in the future for WACCI. What do you think ?

Sorry it took so long but it's a bit difficult to explain things like that short and sweet. This looks more like an article.

Yours CPCingly
Paul Collins
Poole

<<Hello there Paul, thank's for the information about Parados and the Maplins Board. I look forward to reading the modification article, to give you my answer as to what I think on that score.

As with Peter Campbells letter, I don't think it would be proper to make any comment about one part of your letter. I think it best, as Fair Comment Editor, that I remain neutral and kept those opinions, at least, to myself. James does have a letter in this month though. WOW! I've just broken the habit of a lifetime - Philip>>

BABANI BOOKS ARE BRILL (OUCH)

Dear Paul, last month, at about this time, it was my intention to renew my subscription and to put forward the name of Johnny Mathis or perhaps Jim Reeves "In the arms of Mary". I realise that it's a wee bit late.

It has occurred to me Paul that somebody in the WACCI membership might just be able to help me over a problem that I've landed myself in.

I have recently constructed (if that's the word) a Hornby OO gauge three train railway. It works fine, the only trouble that I have to dash around the table to open or close the points. This is a bit wearing so I decided to electrifying all the point and to add signals.

Whilst I was in my favourite Model shop discussing with the proprietor about model trains etc. He got onto the subject of large computer controlled sets which set me thinking, can I? why not?

Here is where you Paul or maybe a reader, can help. I've got it stuck in my mind that some time ago, a couple of years perhaps, there was a discussion within the WACCI pages about the control of a model train set. I seem to recall that it stretched over three or four issues. There was a program or article in one issue written by a member from Cornwall. I was talking to John Bowley

about this and John thinks that perhaps it was printed in AMSTRAD ACTION and Not WACCI.

There is one other point, Maplins have a couple of books in their 1994 catalogue. These are no longer on the shelf, but maybe just maybe there is a member out there who knows where I might get hold of a copy.

The books are:- Model Railway Projects and Electronic Circuits for the Computer Control of Model Railways. The author of both books was R.A. Penfold the former title was published by Babani I don't know about the second, but my guess is that this book too was a Babani publication.

Best wishes

Reg Tabb
North Baddesley

<<Hi Reg. I'm about to throw the Model Railway query out to the general readership and hope that someone can come up with an answer.

However, I do know a little about the Babani publications. I use these little books myself quite often, and most of the time I find them in the small, sole proprietor electronic shops. Main bookshops don't seem to have them any more, which is a shame, since they are very good.

If you have trouble finding these books, then can I suggest you try calling Birketts on Lincoln 520767. He's a very reliable supplier and I've never had problems with him -Philip>>

<<Hi Reg, Southerland Brothers and Quiver did the original of "Arms of Mary" as we now know but thanks for trying to help. -Paul>>

HAVE A BREAK...

Dear Angie, My 6128 is "playing up" so that I get BREAK every time I try to run a program and all sorts of rubbish when trying to save, also losing disc contents. Consequently, I have been unable to check whether the various parts of the route-planner (ROUTE, RPLAN.CHR, ROUTES C4, ROUTES C5), will work. These are all transferred from the AA tape using my 464 and UTOPIA "copy" see "ROOTPLAN".

From his letter in last month's Fair Comment, Mark Johnson appears to be aware that this program is a "tight fit" for memory and that all external roms etc., should be disconnected.

The Dizzy components (DIZZY, CODE2B,

CODE1, SCREENB) were loaded using the AA transfer (first time I have got one to work!) and the program as disced, runs on my 464.

Have added JLCOPY.BAS an introduction (always made showing keys etc.,) to JL-COPY.BIN which I use for these transfers but it does not work for this tape!

On side one, I have included "PC" which I find useful in changing the colours when working with PROTEXT in MODE 2. My sight is such that I have to sit some 6 to 8 feet from the monitor and often change colours (according to the light) in the course of a letter.

If the programs work, please be good enough to forward disc to Mark Johnson and ask him to send one back in due course.

Re: MOUSE like Richard Narain, I find this useless so would be happy to post it on. I cannot discover what the centre button is supposed to do. Should have expected this to enable / disable movement but it does not appear to have any effect using the short prog. written for it, the instructions are useless! So has the club a home for it? Yours sincerely,

Denis Anthers
Dorset

<<Hello Denis. I've sent a disc onto Mark and sent yours back to you directly. So that's done. Next, the error you have on your computer sounds something like a problem I had not so long ago.

If you have something plugged into the Joystick port and said something is damaged, it can do all sort of strange things to the computer. If you get this kind of problem, unplug all the add-ons you have connected to the machine and then try again. If it works correctly, the add everything back again, one at a time and then you'll rapidly discover which unit is causing the error.

As to the third mouse button, well, I'm going to let you answer that question yourself but INKEY(78) is the command in question, as you correctly state.... read on folks -Philip>>

...HAVE A KITKAT (OR A MOUSE)

Dear Mr Dwerryhouse, Further to my letter of the 14th. ultimo (on disc as WACCI) and to Richard Gough's letter

in the last issue re INKEY (78), I have got the middle button of the mouse to work using the following simple program.

```
10 MODE 1
20 a$=CHR$(231):x=20:y=12
30 LOCATE x,y:PRINT a$;
40 IF INKEY(72)=0 THEN y=y-1:
   IF y<1 THEN y=1
50 IF INKEY(73)=0 THEN y=y+1:
   IF y>25 THEN y=24
60 IF INKEY(74)=0 THEN x=x-1:
   IF x<1 THEN x=1
70 IF INKEY(75)=0 THEN x=x+1:
   IF x>39 THEN x=39
80 IF INKEY(77)=0 THEN x=x-10:
   IF x<1 THEN x=1
90 IF INKEY(76)=0 THEN x=x+10:
   IF x>39 THEN x=40
100 IF INKEY(78)=0 THEN x=1:y=1
110 FOR d=1 TO 100:NEXT
120 GOTO 30
```

Whilst this enables it to be used as a drawing device, as stated in an earlier letter I am not interested. Consequently I would be happy to post it on. So has the club a home for it?

Yours sincerely
Denis Anthers
Dorset

<<I'm sure someone will find a home for your lonesome rodent -Philip>>

<<Please send it back to John Bowley if you could please Dennis, and it can become a competition prize once more. I hope Richard Narrain doesn't win it again! -Paul>>

WOW! I DID IT

Dear Paul, Please find enclosed cheque for £9.00 for 6 more copies of WACCI taking me to no 100. I've also enclosed a list of tapes and a couple of disc's that I do not require if you could put them into the Market stall I would be grateful. I managed to buy CPC 464 very cheaply with a faulty monitor, it had lots of tapes that I will not play as I'm not a games player, the odd chess game perhaps so I thought I would try and get rid of them. I hope I haven't over priced them if you think I have please feel free to lower the price. I wonder if you could also put in the market stall that I am looking for MASTERFILE III if anybody has one to sell. I would like to thank John Bowley for

his quick response to my order of disc's and binder all duly received, also to Dave Stitson for the receipt of the same disc's "crossed wire I presume". I have sent Dave's disc's back today. I must say that I thoroughly enjoy reading the WACCI and I'm glad that I became a member.

Yours
Jean Stangroom

PS Can you help me with a problem why can't I run my disc drive with my 64k expansion ram? I type in 'DISC' it just doesn't want to know. Is there something I am not doing right? I want to make a disc copy of the bank tape but cannot.

<<Hello Jean. Your list is on it's was to Angie for inclusion in the Market Stall. I hate doing this, but I'm going to have to throw your query about the expansion ram out to the membership and hope they can come up with an answer.

I know our PD Librarians do a good job but really chaps this sort of service is above and beyond the call of duty. I know what it was, they just wanted to make sure that the discs got to you, just in case one set got lost in the post.

Whilst I'm here, has anyone got, or can anyone write, a program to convert MINI OFFICE II files into PROTEXT DOC or PROG files. I get quite a few letters from the MINI OFFICE program and it takes a while to convert them. Help for the Fair Comment Editor would be deeply appreciated -Philip>>

WACCI 96 - COME ON DOWN

Dear Philip, Just a few lines on the Convention, like all those members who have written to Fair Comment on the subject, I too enjoyed it immensely. I did in fact write to Angie expressing my personal thanks for her efforts at the same time mentioning that maybe we have something constructive to say as to how best next year's convention could be even better.

In her reply Angie commented upon areas where she felt improvements could be made. As much of what she mentioned was similar to my own comments thought it best to air these through Fair Comment.

Firstly we would like tutorials upon different packages for the beginners

amongst us i.e. MicroDesign, Protect, Promerge etc. They could set up in one of the small box rooms with volunteers to do the business.

Secondly another box room should be set aside to contain the complete PD & Homegrown Libraries, with the copying of discs etc being carried out at set times.

We also consider that these small box rooms should be made available to trade companies, where they could show demo's of their produce.

This would leave the Market Stall in the main room where it would be more accessible to members. Maybe we should also have stall away from the Market Stall where members may display items they wish to sell.

Should we not also provide a small box room whereby members could discuss club matters with the 'more active members' such as Paul, John and Angie?

Overall I did feel we were very short of space which did detract a little from my enjoyment. Perhaps after reading/listening to other members comments Angie could supply a proposed costed layout that could be included within the magazine for all members to consider. How the final format should be arrived at is debatable insofar that personal contact is impractical, so it leaves the magazine as being the only contact we have between us all.

Obviously as a PD Librarian I shall hopefully be their, and if there is any additional way I can help just let me know.

I know like me everyone is looking forward to WACCI 96. Hope all this provides food for thought.

Doug Webb
Chorley

<<Dear Doug, a banquet of thought upon which to digest memories of WACCI 95 and look forward to WACCI 96. I like the idea of having ongoing demo's staffed by anyone who cares (or is mad enough to volunteer). Perhaps other members would like to let their ideas be known so that WACCI 96 can beat even the heady heights of WACCI 95. I look forward to hearing them -Philip>>

ANOTHER NEW MEMBER

Dear Paul, Many thanks for the sample magazine. I'm very impressed so enclose a cheque for £18 to cover a

year's issues. I was interested to read about the Parados saga - whether it works in Rom Slot 7. Well I've just purchased a copy and tried it in slot 7 on my Rombo Rombox - no luck at all. Funny thing is, lots of disc type proggyes don't seem to work at all on my CPC6128.

First there were programs in AA (RIP) to disable the disc rom and so release memory to enable some older tapes to play. These never worked for me! Second the AA cover tape which featured a PD program to format discs to a PC format - this didn't work either. And finally, even Parados only partially works - the format options don't all work, in particular the 80 track Double sided Data System formats. Is there something about my CPC I wonder? It's got underneath a sticker marked Manufacturer's version "K". I wonder if anyone else has had similar problems.

By the way I do agree with the comments about the demise of AA, it was a very amateurish way to deal with it and obviously they don't care less about the thousands of readers!

I look forward to being a member of WACCI and intend to keep using my CPC for a long time yet!!

Yours Sincerely
Graham Pennycook
Slough

<<Welcome to the strange world of WACCI, Graham. Parados is something close to my heart at the moment, since it appears that there may be a problem with it, especially when it gets paired up with DES. However, your problem would suggest either a corrupt ROM or, now how do I put this gently, you're not doing it right. <<I'll not say it so gently - have a read of your manual or give Peter Campbell a call, he will put you straight. -Paul>>>

That fact that the AA type-ins don't work is nothing new. Quite a few of them were, in the end, rather lacking in their ability to do the task in hand. If I knew what the programs were I'd be able to bench test them on the computers I have here.

Incidentally, if anyone had got DES and Parados together, and they're having any problems with either the DES high capacity formatting, or Parados copying, then let me know. I'd be most interested -Philip>>

ANOTHER NEW MEMBER (AGAIN)

Dear Paul, thank you for sending free copy of WACCI following phone call during which I rambled on about the demise of AA and CPC in general. I was very impressed with the magazine and enclose £4.50 for the next three issues. I will re-subscribe at the end of the three months but being on a fairly low income this is about all I can lay out in one go. I shall also be ordering some ex software house 3" discs once my membership is confirmed.

Perhaps I should tell you something about myself being a new member. I entered the world of computing 5 years ago when I bought a CPC 464 for my children complete with welcome tape, a few books and nothing else. We then spent the next few months going round car boot sales trying to buy second hand software for the computer. I then saw an advert in a shop window offering to give 'basic' lessons and I replied. A very nice man came to my house every week for 12 weeks telling me all he could but in the end it finished up with me asking him questions he couldn't answer and even worse me giving him a program called printer.con which enabled him to set up his own printer. Yes I was hooked. I then discovered ACU and AA and was able to continue my delving into programming a CPC. My first serious effort was a guitar tutor where the opening screen with a picture of a guitar was written entirely in basic and the music was written in the same way, a three channel rendition of Local Hero. Thank goodness for G-Paint and Bootracker. Yes most of my software came from AA. <<How about sending me a copy of this program. I'd like to see it -Philip>>

Two years ago I managed to pick up a cheap 6128 which came complete with 60 discs and a second multiface. As a bonus it also included a Rom box with Protext, Prospell and Utopia on rom. I also managed to buy a lot of stuff dirt cheap from people who were abandoning their CPC's to buy PC's. I would tell them my CPC would do anything a PC could do if perhaps a LITTLE BIT SLOWER. Perhaps not strictly true but it does everything I want it to do. This way I was able to buy a light pen, Dart Scanner which fixed to my citizen printer head with some cleverly placed blutack, a daisy

wheel printer and a printer selection box. The disc drive which I had bought for my 464 worked as a B drive for the 6128.

Having this set up does have problems. People do tend to rope you in for various things. I am now the secretary of the local Scouts group and also the local residents and tenants association, producing minutes, letters, newsletters and annual reports using a mixture of Protext, Tasword 6128, Powerpage, G-Paint, Rambase 3 and Easydraw.

My other hobby is music, playing in a local band and I am at present programming a utility to produce printed music not having been able to find a commercial program to do the job, have I found something a PC can do which a CPC can't?

I am a fairly proficient programmer in basic and would not object to my name being added to the telephone help section. Times 8pm to 11pm and not Saturday nights as I am usually playing in the band then.

Sorry to ramble on for so long but look forward to receiving future issues of WACCI.

Yours sincerely
Malcolm Brabbin
Suffolk

<<I like hearing from new members. Hi there Malcolm, welcome to WACCI. If you write any interesting software, let me have a copy of it. I'm always interested in members efforts, which, quite often, leave professional programs standing.

As for being roped into things. Well, I know how that feels. You wouldn't believe the workload that appears on my desk (actually its a wardrobe) during the week.

Our dear old CPC machines may not be as fast as PC computers, but saying that, I don't foresee replacing my machines just yet -Philip>>

SECRETARY WITH A COMPLEX

Dear Tigger & friends, thank you all for the kind words regarding the convention, I'm so glad that you all had a good day I know I did. Seriously though whilst I do appreciate the thanks I would like comments and ideas for the next great day out, as it's you that make the day and the day is for you. So get writing friends as

I'm going to start planning the next one straight after Christmas.

Also a thank you to the members who contacted me re: Art Studio thanks for your help, but I must admit I've given up the idea of producing a letterhead simply because I need about 250 and having to put the paper through the printer twice takes too long and also I worry about the printer head. A local printer will do the job for £30 so it hardly seems worth it. But at least I've had some fun!! I've actually learnt a bit about Promerge.

I bet Phillip's going to say something about me calling him tigger but I do think it's very funny.

Regards
Angie Hardwick
Bloxwich

<<My dearest Secretary, would I say anything about you calling me Tigger, or even getting my name wrong (it's Philip, not Phillip). No, of course I wouldn't. I wouldn't get upset about it all at would I. No, of course not. And I wouldn't keep going on about it either. Angela Cook, however, who started this off in the first place, did announce our imminent marriage the other week which took me a little by surprise -Philip>>

WACCI - TRAPPED BY A SPIDER?

Dear Angie, Philip and all, it was wonderful to see so many people at the WACCI Convention. When I was there I spoke to a few people about setting up WACCI pages on the Internet. These are now available so if you can access World Wide Web, the url is:

<http://info.ox.ac.uk/~chri0264/wowwww.html>

<<all one line and no spaces. -Paul>>
WOWWW stands for WACCI on World Wide Webb. There isn't much available, but I am setting up an email helpline and various other pages.

There seem to be a lot of people after MIDI interfaces at the moment. (Market Stall, issue 94). If anyone has a Midi interface other than the Ram Music Machine, I'd be interested in a copy of any programming details there may be in the manuals. I have recently found information about the SMF Format (Standard Midi File Format) and so I am hoping to write a utility

to play SMF files using an Amstrad and a Midi interface. If I could make it work with interfaces other than the Ram one, it would be much better.

It was interesting to read Robin Tanner's letter. I agree that WACCI needs to have more news and reviews. I suppose someone needs to volunteer to do this. I was a bit surprised that there were as many as four pages of fiction in the magazine this issue. Striking the right balance between technical articles and lighter stuff must be very tricky. It would be nice to know what kinds of series people want, e.g an introduction to machine code, or a "Very Advanced Basic"!

On another point, I seem to remember reading that the name WACCI was thought up by Alex Aird and Jeff Walker during that very important telephone call in 1987. I always thought it stood for the Worldwide Amstrad CPC User Club (sort of!)

Best Wishes
Mathew Phillips
Oxford

<<Hello there Mathew. WACCI on the Web, excellent idea. I'm a complete innocent in such matters however, so I'm not going to make any further comments on it, other than to repeat that it a very good idea.

I'm also going to skip over Music Machines as well. If anyone needs to ask why, just remember how confused I got over Foundation Step Time Sequencers.

The content of the magazine, however, is something that is always under review. If you want more of something, or less of something, or even something totally new, let us know and we'll do our very best to accommodate your wishes. WACCI belongs to the members, not to those of us who write for these hallowed pages.

I'm going to be politically correct about the WACCI name, and refer the gentleman to the answer I gave some moment ago -Philip>>

<<Hi Mathew, I've had a look at WOWWW, damned good stuff and I know you are going to add more to it, graphics included. Did you get my email sent via a friend. -Paul>>

TO SIR OR NOT!!

Dear Sir (Paul), please find enclosed cheque £15.00 for a further 10 issues

of WACCI, to continue with issue 98.

I have not written for any advice or ideas, not because I haven't the need to do so, more for the reason of not really knowing at what point to start, maybe in the not to distant future.

WACCI gives me much pleasure and I find very interesting reading.

Yours sincerely
T Litherland
Gwynedd

Found one query. What may be suggested for re-inking the keyboard keys? I have tried black indelible ink, this does not last? Thanks in anticipation.

<<Dear 'T'. To redo fading letters on the keyboard, try Letraset covered with a clear nail varnish. That does the trick.

A word of warning through. We must never refer to Paul as Sir, it gives him idea above his station and we wouldn't want that to happen now would we. No, I didn't think -Philip>>

A TASTE OF HUMBLE PIE

Dear Angie and Philip, there are two letters in Fair Comment issue 94 that I must reply to.

Firstly to Steve Stitson. I thought that IC116 in my three CPC 6128's was a 40010 but to make sure I had a look inside all of them and I can confirm that they all have 40010 in IC116 position. The one that has alternative positions for IC116 has the IC soldered in whereas the others have IC sockets.

Secondly to Peter Campbell. I guess I will have to eat humble pie. I am sorry that I inferred you had copied the circuit of another romboard. As the saying goes, there are more ways to skin a cat. I know that similar results can be achieved by using different ICs and circuitry. I am also sorry that I wrote to Peter Campbell of Microgenic knowing that you are not associated with that company but with Campursoft.

I may also say that since my previous letter was published I have dealt with Peter by mail order and that my order was received by return of post. Pity previous CPC dealers could not claim to do this.

Going way back to issue 82 of WACCI I gave details of where to obtain CPC6128 disc drive belts and also the

size. In the following issue Wally Collinson of Gloucester wrote that he had obtained a belt from the source I gave but did not agree that the length was 201mm that I stated. The 64mm given is the diameter and if multiplied by pi gives 201mm, the circumference, which in turn is the actual length of the belts. I had occasion recently to buy a new belt for one of my machines and the price inclusive of VAT was 80 pence. How can some dealers justify £5 and £10 kits for drive belts? A rip off surely.

Good Luck
James Gall
Aberdeen

<<This was the letter I was most hoping to receive this month. Thanks James. I'm sure Peter and Paul (I've put them in that order again) accept your apology.

I wish someone would write an article on Parados on Slot 7, something that puts together all the information WACCI has, into one place, and finally ends all of the confusion and difficulties this otherwise excellent ROM is causing. -Philip>>

<<If I may step at this point James and try to stop another war breaking out. SD Microsystems do a Drive Reviver Kit at £10. It is not a rip off as the kit contains a belt, a drive head cleaner and instructions. Telephone help is also included should any user of the kit get in trouble. And Steve Denson also tries to make a living from selling CPC products.

If you are an expert, know where to buy the correct belt, know how to fit it, know what to do if the drive fails to work after you have fitted the belt, then sure do your own thing but don't slag off CPC companies who offer genuine products to help the CPC user. I for one am glad SD are still supporting the CPC and would gladly part with £10 for the kit.

Sorry to go on so James but I felt it important to state my view. -Paul>>

THE LOVE OF MY LIFE?

Dear WACCI, Some time ago somebody asked about the amount of CPC's sold. Well, in the March 1985 edition of what was then, Amstrad CPC 464 User, it stated that 200,000 CPC's had been sold world wide by the end of 1984. A much larger than expected proportion

was to export markets. As the name of the magazine and the year ending sales suggests, it will be 464 machines, and not the 664, 6128 or even the Plus (funny how they look like Amiga's isn't it?)

Now, I don't know how this equates to total sales, however I do know that Philip was going to phone Amstrad to see if they would spill the beans, but as yet, I don't know how successful he was in extracting this information.

In issue 94 Robin Tanner brought up some points about Amstrad Action. Paul and I went into finding out about mailshots of their subscription lists, but I am afraid it was not possible due to the Data Protection Act 1984 saying that they can't give out people's personal information unless they have their express permission.

I also asked about their CPC equipment, but Simon Stansfield, the Publisher who made the decision on Amstrad Actions closure, decided to keep the machines because he thought they may have some value in the future.

As far as copy and cover tape stuff goes, I spoke to Karen Levell, who was the last Editor and she basically said that contributors (Richard Fairhurst, Richard Wildey, myself etc) regained the copyright on material commissioned but not yet printed. Simon Forrester had written loads of stuff, but she said that was probably in the depths of their storage area, she didn't clear out the office, so she doesn't know. The Cover tape has the same story I am afraid.

Keep up the good work Philip

Angela Cook
West Sussex

<<Well Angela, my dear. What can I possibly say to you after all the trouble you've caused me. Angie calls me Tigger now (as will others I suspect), you almost give me a heart attack by sending out an invitation to our forthcoming wedding (without telling me first) and now, this. At least there are some people out there who think I'm wonderful -Philip>>

SPEAKING OF BEING WONDERFUL

Dear Philip, having just read my WACCI, I felt I had to put pen to paper after reading a certain letter. The letter in question is from Mike Lyons. As I read it, a question came to my mind. 'How well does Mike Lyons know Philip DiRichleau?'. And the answer, not very well! I came to this conclusion because of the use of the word 'mature' in the same sentence as Philip.

But having said that, I do enjoy Fair Comment, in fact, it's my favourite part of WACCI. Yours,

Victoria Hubbard
Navenby

PS I think you ARE wonderful.

<<Thank you Victoria. At least someone else thinks I'm wonderful. You will notice that Mike stated that Fair Comment was maturing, not I. What a terrible thought, a mature and sensible Tigger (where did that come from?) -Philip>>

<<Philip did have his picture in the Convention report last issue, it's on page 15, just left of centre on the photo - can you spot him? Clue: he hasn't got short hair. -Paul>>

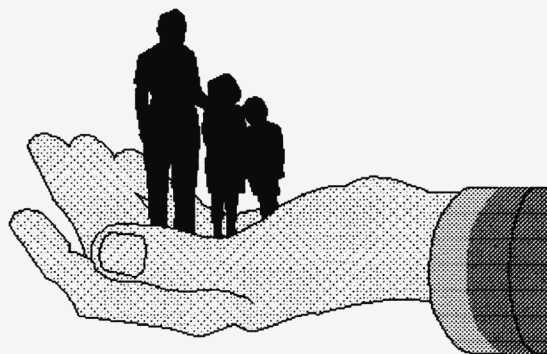
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 Please contact: Roy Everett,
 2 Coldnailhurst Avenue, Braintree,
 Essex CM7 2SJ TEL: 01376 344572

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5 x 3" Blank Discs (used) each	£0.60
Please contact: Mark Johnson,	
13 Ashway, Corringham, Essex, SS17 9EB	
Tel: 01375 677631	

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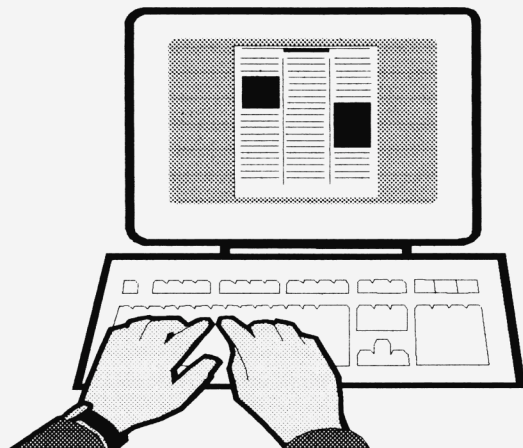
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PRESS BARON

by David Crookes

Read all about it! Read all about it! Stop Press! Corny intro written by David Crookes to persuade you to read this article.

MADNESS

So you want to start a fanzine. Why? To get rich? Then forget it. To become famous? Well it's possible. To support the CPC? Do it!

The truth of the matter is that fanzine publishing is hard work, especially if you do it all by yourself. I used to edit a magazine called CPC Undercover and it took, on average, thirty hours every two months to write, design and edit it and I only made about thirty pounds an issue. So why did I do it? I'm raving mad. Blip! Bonk!

Seriously, though, if you do want to start your publication then you'll have to start some planning. In this here article I'm going to shove you in the general direction that you should be travelling to get a fanzine off the ground and flying into the realms of the real.

TIPPEROONIES

First things first. Have you got the time to do it? A good way of finding out how long it would take you to actually produce the thing is to contact an existing fanzine and ask them if they want any writers. Most will say an emphatic yes. By writing and designing a full page for them, you'll be able to gauge how long it would take you to do a full mag.

Try and get together a band of merry scribblers to help you out. Do it all yourself and you'll find it is a mammoth task to perform. (Like I found when I began my first issue - can I say thanks to Angela Cook, Jo Wood, Joe Moulding, Paul Fairman, Peter Curcuven, Melvyn Phillips and every other extremely helpful person who helped me out from issue two? Thanks!)

PENNIES

Get a few quotes on publishing costs and decide whether or not it would be financially viable before you begin production.

You should aim to produce in the region of forty copies of your first issue. This way you can keep the costs down a little and test the field. Perhaps only photocopy each mag as and when you get an order.

When deciding on the amount of pages you want your 'zine to have, look at other fanzines to work out the average.

Price it at a cost relevant to the amount of pages and whether or not you include any extras such as a disc or tape (which help get a few more orders as it increases value for money). As a guide 20 A5 pages should be around a pound. If you've decided on a discmag then have a think about whether you'd like to make it PD or not.

..COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

To be different why not offer something which is a bit bizarre (like Impact and its infamous sense of humour) or specialised (8Bit's advertising wheeze). You may not get as great a readership as an all rounder would, but you'll get a lot of fans.

Design is important to a mag. If you aren't great at design then keep it simple. Don't have an abundance of fonts on a page and break up the text a bit without turning it into a comic (unless that is what you want). Clip art can come in handy for brightening things up.

Advertising should be done straight away. Send a copy to WACCI, 8-Bit Mart and CPC User for review.

AND FINALLY....

Last of all, have fun. Enjoy yourself because it can be enjoyable. Honest! Just remember that fanzines need to be distributed (have you the time?) and keep your customers happy.

But what makes a good fanzine, the writing or the design? The obvious answer is a beautiful mixture of the two, blended smoothly to give an effect that will leave everybody gasping in awe, telling their friends and having intimate chats with people at bus stops about it.

Here we take a look at the two fundamental parts of a fanzine - it's content and appearance - with a bit of comment on what each bit should contain.

Content: This encapsulates quite a few things. It takes into account how many words there appear to be for a good wholesome read, and ponders over what is actually in the magazine. In other words if there is lots of quality variety (ie. not an excuse to waste space willy nilly for no apparent reason other than laziness). The way it is written also comes under this heading. In short, is it a damn good read?

Appearance: Easy one this. If it looks excellent, then people will want to read. It doesn't necessarily have to be full of pictures but if it looks remotely tidy it will be inviting. Even so the factor of easy to readness crops up here too - if it looks good but hinders the reading of it, then that's defeated the objective.

THE END

Prospective editors take note of these tips and set about producing some wonderful creations. And remember: do try this at home.

David Crookes

VERY BASIC

BASIC

Written by
Alan Tilling

Letters to:-
Very Basic Basic
65 Lawrence Road
Altrincham
Cheshire
WA14 4EL



Hello everyone, I'm back after my little rest. If I'm in time for Christmas Happy Christmas every one. If I'm not, I hope you had a good Christmas and are starting a happy New Year. Earlier in 1995 I said that the VbB articles were leading somewhere. Well now I can reveal that all the recent techniques are all going to be used in Translations by computer.

For the benefit of new commers let me say straight away that I am starting from scratch and you don't need any earlier pieces to follow what I'm going to write. A certificate from a certain kind of institution may come in handy but no prior knowledge of Basic is needed. If you get stuck drop me a line and I will do my best to confuse you.

I'm hoping to go all the way to full machine translation between languages but let's see how we get on. I think that will be some way off yet.

START

Before I start I will tell you of my set up. I have a 6128 with a colour monitor, a DMP2160 printer and a rom box containing Protext, Prospell and Utopia. Obviously you need a computer but the program does not use any specialised keywords (I don't think) so it will run on any of the CPC range. *You do not need any of the other things* but you may have to juggle with the colours if your on a green screen.

START AGAIN

The first thing is my little routine for easy development and saving:

```
1 goto 3
2 save"trans":stop
3 on break gosub 10000
9999 end
10000 mode 2:ink 0,13:ink 1,0:
border 13:list:return
```

When you are developing a program you will keep making mistakes and will need to hit the escape key now and then. If you hit it twice in succession then you will have issued a break command and line 3 tells the computer to stop what its doing and go to the subroutine located at line 10000. The commands it finds there cause it to change to the 80-column mode (for easy reading), make the background white and the ink black. The border is

changed to white and the program is automatically listed ready for review. The return is only there for completeness. Since it is the last command you could probably get away without it.

Have a look at program 1. The first few lines are REMarks for the titles. This is followed by MODE 1 in line 60. This sets up the type of writing I want on the screen. By the way, I always type my programs in in lower case. As basic accept each line, it turns it into capital letters. This means that if I make a spelling mistake when it stays in lower case and is easy to spot.

Lines 70 to 100 DIMension some

```
10 REM ***** Translations (verison 1.1) *****
20 REM ***** by ^Alan Tilling for Very *****
30 REM ***** basic Basic in WACCI *****
40 REM
50 REM ***** Initialisation Routine *****
60 MODE 1
70 DIM english$(100)
80 DIM tempeng$(100)
90 DIM latin$(100)
100 DIM templat$(100)
110 :
120 ' ***** Menu *****
130 :
140 INK 0,14:INK 1,0:BORDER 14:MODE 1
150 LOCATE 8,3:PRINT"*****"
160 LOCATE 8,5:PRINT"* TRANSLATION PROGRAM *"
170 LOCATE 8,7:PRINT"*****"
180 LOCATE 5,10:PRINT"1) Translate"
190 LOCATE 5,12:PRINT"2) Enter data (from keyboard)"
200 LOCATE 5,14:PRINT"3) Save data to disc"
210 LOCATE 5,16:PRINT"4) Load data from disc"
220 LOCATE 5,18:PRINT"5) Exit program"
230 LOCATE 5,23:INPUT"Please make your selection ... ",ms
240 ON ms GOTO 1000,2000,3000,4000,5000
```

PROGRAM 1

```

5000 :
5010 ' ***** Exit routine *****
5020 :
5030 INK 0,16:INK 1,0:BORDER 16:CLS
5040 LOCATE 11,9:PRINT"Leave this Program?"
5050 LOCATE 13,13:INPUT"Are you Sure";exit$
5060 exit$=UPPER$(exit$)
5070 IF exit$="Y" THEN CALL 0 ELSE 140
5080 END

```

PROGRAM 2

arrays that are used later in the program. More about these when the time comes.

TITLES BUT NO KNIGHTHOOD

It is always worth putting titles on each sub-routine. After a very few weeks you will have forgotten what each piece is for, and if you need to amend any part of it, then you could have problems. Be warned.

Notice 110 and 130 have colons ;, these make excellent separators. Line 120 starts off with an apostrophe. This is accepted by Basic as a REM but is smaller and makes the listing easier to read.

ME 'N YOU

Line 140 puts pastel blue (14) ink in pen number 0, black ink (0) in pen 1, changes the border to pastel blue (14) and sets up mode 1, the 40 column mode. Locate uses two parameters x and y. These are the same x and y you

learned to love when doing graphs at school. x is along the horizontal (column number) and y is the line number. So line 150 says goto column 8 on line 3 and print a load of stars. 160 says goto the same place on line 5 and print the text that is within the quotes. The system is repeated all the way to 220. 230 is similar but this time instead of print it is input. The input command has its own print statement built in and so a message appears on the screen. The part of the line ",ms" tells the computer to put what ever is inputted into a variable called ms. The last line of this section means take the contents of ms and goto the first, second, third etc. line number as stated.

THE LAST LINE

Just to finish off this time we shall go, not to the second sub-routine, not to the third but to the last one,

number 5 which funnily enough starts at line 5000.

EXIT STAGE LEFT

Have a look at program 2. Again the first three lines are the title lines. You really can't have enough of them, honest. 5030 sets up black writing on a pink screen. This screen needs to be striking because the program may be lost if its warning is not heeded. In column 11 on line nine the question "Leave this program" is asked. The next line is a prompt to make sure. This is an input statement who's answer is held in the variable called exit\$. Line 5060 converts the reply into UPPER CASE. It is then compared with the letter Y. If it is Y then call 0 has exactly the same effect as the three fingered reset, any other key will take Basic back to line 140 and the menu will be presented. Notice line 5080, it is never used. It was put there when the program was first developed. Don't bother to type it in.

Just to make the menu program work for the time being it will be worth entering these lines:

```

1000 goto 120
2000 goto 110
3000 goto 130
4000 goto 140

```

They don't do any thing exciting just stop stupid error messages appearing. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. *See you next month, Alan.*

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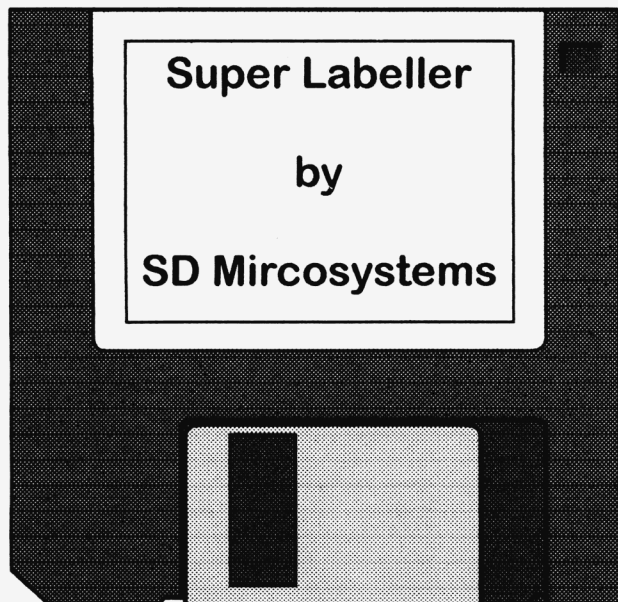
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ANGELA COOK GETS LABELLED

Labelling your discs, can be an art, but with SD Microsystems Super Labeller, you have no need for palette and brush. Angela Cook limbers up and shows us her talents <<Golly gosh, I can't wait. -Paul>>

A SOUP SONG

Where do I start? The end? How about the beginning? That sounds a good idea. In the beginning, there were only dinosaurs, which formed from primordial soup <<not that far in the beginning, try about 65 million years later- Paul>>. Okay, a little more up to date then (and he didn't notice my rather indirect Red Dwarf quote). Super Labeller, I guess that's what you want to read about, and read about it you shall.

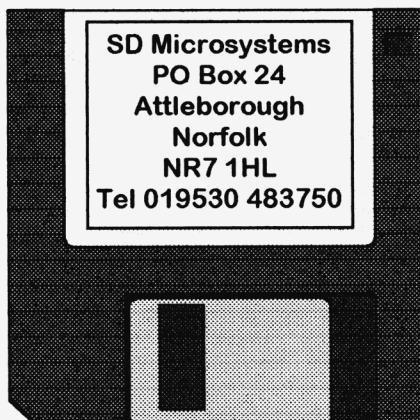
MONO vs COLOUR

Super Labeller CPC Colour is one of two versions of a labelling program. There is also a PCW version, which is slightly different, and slightly more expensive. Super Labeller comes in a cheaper mono version, and a tad more expensive colour version, allowing you to print coloured text or pictures. The latest version is more updated, and allows you to over-print more times, for a darker and more defined display.

GIRLS CAN BE FUN....

Super Labeller What-ever-version, is basically a labelling program from SD Microsystems, to label your discs. But that's not all. You don't have to label your discs, you can use ordinary labels, for addresses, or labelling boxes of things, or whatever lights your fire.

My brother printed loads out, stuck them on another piece of highly illuminated paper and made a poster, warning innocent little people, like his younger brother, to keep out. He also warned girls to keep clear, although this attitude may well change in the next few years.



... BUT CLIP ART IS TOO

Basically, you type in your label contents, add any pictures and away you go. Pictures are in the form of clip art. If you have the clip art, you can put any of the thousands of piccies on your label. A range of clip art files come with Super Labeller, and there is just loads of it in PD libraries (KAD has about 11 discs, which is only scraping the surface). Text can be produced in different sizes and densities, italic, bold,

underline and so on, as long as your printer can do it, so can Super Labeller. You can print in colour also, which adds great effects to what ever you're doing.

RYFM TIME

The hardest part of this, is setting up the labels on your printer. Once you have worked through the manual, and learnt how to set things up, how to put text and pictures together for example, it is easy. You can sit for hours doing labels, tweaking them and playing around until you have it how you want.

AND FINALLY...

John Bowley now has a copy of Super Labeller Colour, from SD Microsystems, as a Competition prize, so watch the Compo pages for it.

Angela Cook

SD Microsystems can be found at:

*PO Box 24, Attleborough, Norfolk
NR7 1HL. Tel: 019530 483750*

Super Labeller CPC is just £12.50 and £15 for the colour version. If your interested, the PCW version (which is slightly different, phone for details) is £19.95. Postage is extra though, but affordable at just £1.



CHARLEY'S DIARY



Question: What's the difference between Charley's Diary and Better Than Life?
Answer: One goes on about CDs a lot and only manages to appear on average once a year, the other is BTL.

THE CONVENTION

There are more original ways to start an article, but I thought I'd be conventional. (Groan.) No, really, it was ace: any misgivings I might have had about a Protext and ROMDOS fetishists' orgy were dispelled by the extremely pleasant presence of... huge amounts of people. I could list them, but it'd start turning into a demo-type 'greetinx' (yeuch) list. Just one thought: have you noticed how Rob (Scott) looks even more like Paul Merton than usual in issue 94's picture? <<Yep -Paul>>

It's pretty much the CPC's Indian summer, of course: although a 1996 meeting would undoubtedly be fun, there are bound to be people who have departed for pastures new by next year - do make sure they're Macintoshes, not Windows boxes. However, given even half of the enthusiasm and top-notch organisation that went into this one (another three cheers for Angie and co. That makes 372 so far by my count), no doubt it'll still be fun. See you there...?

THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE

Angela Cook's piece, by the way, isn't actually 'The One And Only WACCI Convention Report' - there'll be one in BTL 3, written by Rob Scott (aka Hangman). Contributions have been flooding in, so we're hoping to have the issue ready by Christmas - Christmas 1996, that is - with articles ranging from cracking tutorials to film reviews, from a response to David Crookes's 'Who Shot the CPC?' to 20 Things You Never Knew

About Germany. Standard BTL fare, in other words. There'll be a bundled copier, too, to solve the problem that very little save Discology or Xexor can duplicate BTL.

DEADLINE, WHAT DEADLINE?

Amazingly enough, this is the fourth Charley's Diary to be written. I keep on writing the things and never getting round to sending them off to Paul. This is probably just as well, as issue 94's column would have been a largely tedious spiel about AA (it's not that bad) and the associated covertape (it's not that bad either). Just a few excerpts... amidst all the ranting, I can sort of understand why Terge Grind feels aggrieved. But is 'fighting to the bitter end' really the right attitude to take? And the October issue was very late in Britain, let alone Norway.

No, Future really did put a lot of effort into the magazine, even after their takeover by Pearson. Sure, they closed it when it started making a loss on paper - but would you do any different? I'd argue that AA had been actually been effectively loss-making for at least a year before it closed: the paper profit neglected invisibles such as the use of Future's office space (not cheap in Bath) and, most importantly, the unavailability of extremely talented writers such as Simon Forrester and Karen Levell to the company's other magazines.

Anyway, it's all water under the bridge, and aside from the covertape, I can't really speak on behalf of the magazine - it's not my place as an

(ex-) freelancer, when Karen, Rebecca and Simon worked so hard for it. Just please don't start hurling insults around at the AA writers or at Future. Neither deserve it.

Having said which, if you really want to get back at the company, the best way would be to boycott their publication 'Future Music', and plump for a thoroughly excellent magazine called 'Keyboard Review'...

WROTE FOR LUCK

Robin Tanner suggested that Techy Forum is resurrected in WACCI - an interesting idea, and I'd be interested to hear other people's views. If everyone's enthusiastic, and Paul approves, I'd be happy to write a column (mind you, Philip and Paul are doing a pretty good job of reprinting my old ones....) Until then, a few answers to questions raised in issues 92 to 94.

* North and South (AA 117). No, it doesn't work on a 6128. The game wasn't actually the first choice for the tape, but due to Ocean Software messing us around a lot, it had to go on as a bit of a rush job. I have to admit to being extremely proud of cracking the protection on the game and getting it down from 360k to around 100k with no noticeable loss, but sadly, there wasn't the time to test the game on a 6128 - I only have a 464, 664 and a copy of the Plus ROMs. There are only two bytes which are causing the problems, so next time I meet someone with a 6128 (probably Christmas), I'll get a solution published.

* Philip asked in issue 93 whether there was a way to switch off printer

reset codes. Well, there is: it's a bit of a hack, and won't work on all printers, but...

Dead easy. Look in your printer manual, and find out how long the printer reset code is. Now send the printer the code to print bit image graphics: this will take the width of the graphics as a two-byte parameter, so if the reset code is five characters long, send 0 as the 'most significant byte' parameter and 5 as the 'least significant byte'. (Don't worry, it should make sense in conjunction with a printer manual). If you're using PRINT#8 in BASIC, remember to put a semi-colon at the end of the line.

The printer is now waiting for graphics data, so when it receives a reset code from Stop Press, it will assume that you've sent it this graphics data and plot it on the page. The result is a slight mess, but the printer should hopefully still be in its original state (e.g. red printing). It's worth a try.

* ImagePrint (Jeff Morton, WACCI 93) was actually designed primarily for use with Protext, so I'm not surprised that it doesn't work with Mini Office II, which (as a foreground program, unlike Protext, which is a background program) wipes out the contents of memory on being RUN. There's an easy solution - get yourself a decent word processor. Er...

Alternatively, you might like to try loading ImagePrint, and then writing a short BASIC program to print files from disc (of the sort OPENIN "filename": WHILE NOT EOF: LINE INPUT #9,a\$: PRINT #8,a\$: WEND: CLOSEIN). I don't know how Mini Office II stores its files on disc, never having used the program, but something along these lines will work.

* Robin Tanner (WACCI 94) is interested in the differences between CRTCs. Ok, here's one - go up to a CPC and type OUT &BC00,2: OUT &BD00,50. Some machines (equipped with 'type 0' and 'type 1' CRTCs) will move the screen to the left: some ('type 2') will just crash. Another command to try is OUT &BC00,1: OUT &BD00,64 which produces an interesting 'repeating effect' on type 0 machines only. Furthermore, you can read back values

that you've written to the CRTC on type 0s only, and type 2s won't let you program the frame flyback length, and the list goes on. To be honest, unless you're an avid demo coder or are planning to write the next Prehistorik II, you won't really need to know the differences, but I hope this is enough to be getting on with!

* Robin also asked a couple of other questions. AA 118's covertape was actually finished the evening before I heard about AA's closure, but I didn't get paid for it, let alone any of the program authors, so no copyright deals were actually completed. It would have featured SD Microsystems' 'Super Labeller' plus 'Last of the Smileys', a superb game by Joe Moulding (aka Palm Coding of Systeme D...). CharleyTraCker isn't finished yet, sadly, but when I get some time I'll do some more work on it.

And a plea of my own: has anyone out there got an unwanted Multiface? Mine's broken down, but I do find it an invaluable, if infuriating, debugging aid (far more practical than Hackit). I'll swap it for a copy of RoutePlanner...

SWEET 16

...either on the CPC or the PCW16. Yup, Charley goes cross-platform with a forthcoming conversion to the new super-fast Amstrad - after all, after spending so long typing in all the

RoutePlanner data, it'd be a shame not to reuse it. It's not the only release I'll be working on for the PCW16, but the others will have to remain secret - for now.

CD TIME

This month's recommended purchases: there's a Happy Mondays 'Best Of' compilation out, entitled 'Loads'. The track where Shaun Ryder sings 'You've got what you want, so ---- the rest' - and yes, the offending word really is blanked out on the CD - should bring a smile to BTL readers everywhere...

Of course, I trust that you've all bought Ryder's latest effort, Black Grape's superb debut album. Another debut worth listening to is Dubstar's 'Disgraceful', and I'm sure Rob Buckley will join me in recommending Caroline Lavelle's gorgeous, ethereal 'Spirit' album. What more recommendation could you need?

CHARLEY'S DOUGHNUT COMPANY

And finally, I'm shocked, amazed and stunned to read that Paul considers that the doughnut stall at Bescot was near enough to the Convention. Front door? It's doughnuts we're talking about here - they deserve to have pride of place in the convention hall! (Coming soon, the STS Christmas Meeting. Joint sponsors: Dunkin' Donuts and McDonalds...)

Richard Fairhurst.

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STORY TIME

'POOTER GAMES'

by Angie Sinclair.

Friday evening had arrived along with my two nephews Shane and Tom.

Shane who's a bright 5yr old and Tom a mischievous 3 1/2yr old were spending the weekend with me so as to give their parents a well earned break. The first thing they both did was to run upstairs to the bedroom to make sure I had made their bed up for them. Tom then asks if he can watch the Power Rangers video he'd brought with him while Shane is already in the computer room asking if he can play Fruity Frank.

First I settle Tom in front of the TV with a drink and some crisps then along I go to the computer room to sort out Shane. He's already looking through the numerous discs I have but as he's just learning to read he was having a little trouble finding the disc he wanted.

I switched on the computer and then began the search through my VERY disorganised games discs for Fruity Frank. Eventually I found it and loaded it into the computer for him to play. Well, the two boys are now settled but what about me? Hooray! Time at last to look through my back issues of WACCI. I've been longing to re-read them for ages and to really study the WACCI Index. But, before I even begin to open up an issue young Tom appears. You've guessed it. He wants to play a 'pooter' game.

I persuade Shane to move from the 464 onto my 6128 after having given up my swivel chair first, then I settle Tom in front of the 464. He then thinks I've sat him in front of a TV until I convince him it's a monitor on which he CAN play 'pooter' games.

Once again I begin searching through my games discs. I was looking for Oh Mummy and at last I find it. With a little help from me Tom is soon underway, Shane however has decided he's had enough of Fruity Frank and wants to play a different game.

Once again I search through my games discs until I find Pac-man. He should be able to play that alright. Now both boys are happy and I am able to return to my 'Wonderful WACCI's'. I really must find which disc-organiser they recommend. <<Thanks Angie>>

WANTED

by Martin Bela

A substantial reward is offered for information leading to the running to earth of Eday Current and Elic Tricity. Charged with the Induction of an eighteen year old coil called Milli-Henry, found half Chocked, and with the theft of valuable Joules. Both Unrectified criminals. Armed with Carbon rods and Electron guns they escaped from a Weston Primary Cell where they had been held in Ions.

The escape was planned in Three Phases; first they Fused the Electrolytes, then they climbed through a Grid despite the Impedance of two Poles and ran to a Magnetic Field. After stealing an A.C. motor parked on the Wheat-stone Bridge they drove off through a narrow Band-pass.

A Police COMPUTER managed to MONITOR their WacCI trip, and DISCScovered that the motor is of low Capacity and it is likely that they may try to change it for a big 500 kW Mega-cycle returning Ohm by a short-circuit.

The couple have been missing since Farraday. They may offer serious Resistance and are Potential killers.

Great care must be taken in the way they are handled. <<Ta Martin>>

In issue 87 Dennis Francis wrote a story called Fred. Dennis asked how can someone take over the control of a computer and this is what Stuart Gascoigne reply was....

HOOK

by Stuart Gascoigne

Well I think that it was all done by using wot we programmers call a hook.

This is a bit of code that hooks on (clever the way the words match, eh?) to a bit of the operating system.

This is really easy to do on the CPC 'cos the Firmware Guide gives you all the details of what the operating system calls do and where they go etc.

You can make the things quite sophisticated so that, for example, it sits there in complete silence until a certain letter or word is typed and then zips into action.

It would have been loaded anytime by the other people. I was tempted to knock up a noddy basic version to show you the idea but it was a sunny day.

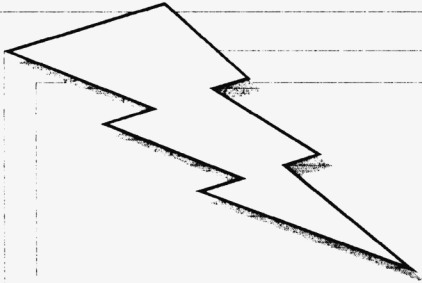
When I worked on mainframes I used to do this kind of dirty deed all the time - a target was selected and in the course of their typing would create a message such as

*** * EMERGENCY OVERLOAD * ***

**ALL YOUR FILES HAVE BEEN DELETED TO
MAKE ROOM FOR EMERGENCY PROGRAM RUN -
PLEASE SEE SYSTEM ADMINISTRATOR
IMMEDIATELY.**

The system would then mysteriously "lock up" and the victim would usually sheepishly take themselves round to the system manager who, in between barely suppressed sniggers, would 'put things right'. A great time was had by all. <<Cheers Stuart>>

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Thot for the Day

by
Sphinx

CHARITY



The hot sultry summer had captured us all in it's thrall. The Ventaxia in the Mariner's groaned away. At it's best inefficient - considering the number of cigarettes the Major can get through in a session - it was clear that the hot air on either side of the fan was going to have a hard time changing sides. We gasped for cool air as the Major strolled in.

I may have explained that Denis (the Major) was retired and, after a pint or so, would regale anyone bold enough to remain in earshot of tales of his service in Africa.

Denis has three ineffable qualities; procurement of free drink, the inability to hear when speaking and a conviction that he controls an imp called Thot which resides in a box of Swan Vestas in his pocket. He thinks, and he has started to persuade me too, that Thot can re-programme computer chips.

"Wotcher!" He cried as he walked into the Lounge Bar.

Most of the regulars were rather taken aback by this unusual outburst. Tourists looking for the grave of Zebedee Payne, a local poet who drank himself to death writing 'Stout Forest' in the pub next door, thought it was part of the pageant which had long been promised in the brochures.

All was explained as the Major drew a large red handkerchief with white polka dots from his sleeve.

"Hay fever", he snuffled.

"I thought you were about to say 'What you're going to have to drink?'" said Pierre Llewelyn (who never learns).

"What you're .. what?", said Denis, with careful inflection after years of experience reeling this particular sort of fish in.

"What are you going to have to drink?" said Pierre, clearly not seeing he was being played.

The Major beamed. "Awfully kind old chap. Thought it was my turn - but churlish to refuse. Whisky water would be nice ... but hang on, Jack's getting short of water. Drought y'know. Most of it's in in the beer. Better make it a double whisky."

Jack, accustomed to the Major's banter and grateful for the enlarged order said nothing and reached for a glass and the optic. Pierre started to protest as Denis engaged a selective hearing mode and turned to me.

Terrible things these computers, [said Denis]. So impersonal, y'know, not a jot of humanity, not an ounce of charity in them and yet we let them run our lives. Cheers, Pierre.

The Major barely paused for breath as a large whisky started its slow and complex journey towards the Mariner's plumbing system. He started to pat his pockets. Those not accustomed to Denis' habits might have thought he was feeling for his wallet. He

eventually located his handkerchief in his sleeve, dabbed his lips, pushed his empty glass slightly towards me and continued.

Was in town late the other evening y'know [continued the Major]. Needed some cash. . .

I nodded sympathetically, hoping that he had at last managed managed to find some. He continued.

. . . and I decided to try one of those 'hole in the wall' things. My branch has a lobby with compartment things.. what do you call them?

"Booths?", I ventured.

Pierre is normally slow on the uptake but he yelped with glee as the enormity of what I had said dawned on me. The Major inched his glass a further inch towards me.

Most decent old chap, [he murmured]. Not too much tonic. So kind. So anyway there was this young gel in front of me. Seemed a bit down at heel and with a babe in a pushchair which looked ill fed and was crying as if there were no tomorrow. Couldn't help looking at the screen. Way you do, y'know, old chap.

Jack, unbidden, collected Denis' glass as the Major continued . . .

Anyway it seemed that the machine was in an uncharitable mood and wouldn't give the poor lass any money. See what I mean? No human feeling. Only

One thing to do, I had a quick word with Thot. He seems to have a way with computer thingies.

Denis tapped the matchbox on the table between us just as Jack placed a glass of gin and tonic in front of Denis and held out his palm to me. Denis cried 'Cheers! Old boy.' Winked at me in a conspiratorial way and rambled on.

The banks have got too much money [he said]. Wouldn't harm them to give the

poor woman a few pounds. Good old Thot did his stuff and the hole-in-the wall churned out a slack handful of notes. Well, the lassie picked them up with a sigh of relief but a look of puzzlement on her face. Nice to be party to a little charity, I feel.

At that point Jack must have become bored and tapped the bell twice for last orders.

Do I hear bells? [Said Denis].

I cannot truthfully relate what happened next in the right order. I know I shouted "Thanks, a large one, Denis." I'm sure that Pierre, normally so slow, said at the same time "Good on yer Major, a double!"

Denis stood, patted various pockets and departed, muttering words like 'slate' to Jack.

<<Sphinx will be appearing again in a magazine near you soon. -Paul>>



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FAQ

Extracts From The

INTERNET

By

Ian and Ron Izett

FOREIGN DISC FORMATS

From here on in it gets a bit technical, strictly for comms buffs and the like. You can add the following lines to the CPMDISKS.DEF which is in CPCEMU, it comes from CompuServe, the file EURO.DEF. Nah wot ah meen, 'arry? I wish I did.

INTRO

What follows is a list of 22DISK Definitions for foreign disk formats. They make sense when you're dealing with Europe.

All AMSTRAD Definitions and some C128 Definitions. Most of them defined and all tested by H Jungkunz. This is well out of my limited computing ability, so it's up to you what you make of all this! I'm given to understand that the word CYLINDER is a Continental(?) reference for tracks.

As before Ian did the down-load, I did the easy bit.

FORMATS

```
BEGIN AMS1 Amstrad PCW8256 - DSDD 96
tpi 5.25" - DENSITY MFM,LOW CYLINDERS
80 SIDES 2 SECTORS 9,512 SKEW 2
SIDE1 0 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9
SIDE2 1 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9
ORDER SIDES LABEL AMS1
BSH 4 BLM 15 EXM 0 DSM 356 DRM 255
ALO OFOH AL1 0 OFS 1 END
```

```
BEGIN AMS2 Amstrad PCW8256 - DSDD 48
tpi 5.25" - DENSITY MFM,LOW CYLINDERS
40 SIDES 2 SECTORS 9,512 SKEW 2
SIDE1 0 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9
SIDE2 1 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9
ORDER SIDES LABEL AMS1
BSH 4 BLM 15 EXM 0 DSM 356 DRM 255
ALO OFOH AL1 0 OFS 1 END
```

```
BEGIN AMS3 Amstrad PCW8256 - SSDD 48
tpi 3" (JOYCE-SYSTEM) - DENSITY
MFM,LOW CYLINDERS 40 SIDES 1 SECTORS
9,512 SKEW 2
SIDE1 0 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9
BSH 3 BLM 07 EXM 0 DSM 174 DRM 63
ALO OCOH AL1 0 OFS 1 END
```

```
BEGIN AMS4 Amstrad CPC System -SSDD 48
tpi 3" or 5.25"- DENSITY MFM,LOW
CYLINDERS 40 SIDES 1 SECTORS 9,512
SKEW 5
SIDE1 0 65,66,67,68,69,70,71,72,73
BSH 3 BLM 7 EXM 0 DSM 170 DRM 63
ALO OCOH AL1 0 OFS 2 END
```

```
BEGIN AMS5 Amstrad CPC-Data - SSDD 48
tpi 3" or 5.25" - DENSITY MFM,LOW
CYLINDERS 40 SIDES 1 SECTORS 9,512
SKEW 5
SIDE1 0 193,194,195,196,197,198,199,
200,201
BSH 3 BLM 7 EXM 0 DSM 179 DRM 63
ALO OCOH AL1 0 OFS 0 END
```

```
BEGIN AMS6 Amstrad B360K - SSDD 96
tpi 5.25" SKEW 2 DENSITY MFM,LOW
CYLINDERS 80 SIDES 1 SECTORS 9,512
SKEW 2
SIDE1 0 65,66,67,68,69,70,71,72,73
BSH 4 BLM 15 EXM 1 DSM 174 DRM 63
ALO O80H AL1 0 OFS 2 END
```

```
BEGIN AMS7 Amstrad VORTEX - DSDD 96
tpi 5.25" - DENSITY MFM,LOW CYLINDERS
80 SIDES 2 SECTORS 9,512 SKEW 2
SIDE1 0 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9
SIDE2 1 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9
ORDER SIDES
BSH 5 BLM 31 EXM 3 DSM 176 DRM 127
ALO O80H AL1 0 OFS 2 END
```

```
BEGIN AMS8 Amstrad CPC System DSDD
96tpi 5.25" - DOBBERTIN - DENSITY
MFM,LOW CYLINDERS 80 SIDES 2 SECTORS
9,512 SKEW 2
SIDE1 0 65,66,67,68,69,70,71,72,73
SIDE2 1 65,66,67,68,69,70,71,72,73
ORDER SIDES
BSH 5 BLM 31 EXM 3 DSM 176 DRM 127
ALO O80H AL1 0 OFS 2 END
```

```
BEGIN AMS9 Amstrad DOBBERTIN DATA
DSDD 96 tpi 5.25" Skew 5 - DENSITY
MFM,LOW - CYLINDERS 80 SIDES 2 SECTORS
9,512 SKEW 2
SIDE1 0 193,194,195,196,197,198,199,
200,201
SIDE2 1 193,194,195,196,197,198,199,
200,201
BSH 5 BLM 31 EXM 3 DSM 179 DRM 127
ALO O80H AL1 0 OFS 0 END
```

```
BEGIN AMSA Amstrad PCW8256 - DSDD 96
tpi 5.25" 10 x 512 788K - DENSITY
MFM,LOW CYLINDERS 80 SIDES 2 SECTORS
10,512 SKEW 2
SIDE1 0 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10
SIDE2 1 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10
ORDER SIDES
LABEL AMSA
BSH 5 BLM 31 EXM 3 DSM 197 DRM 255
ALO OCOH AL1 0 OFS 1 END
```

```
BEGIN AMSB Amstrad PCW 8512 - SSDD 48
tpi 5.25" - DENSITY MFM ,LOW CYLINDERS
40 SIDES 1 SECTORS 9,512
SIDE1 0 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9
BSH 3 BLM 7 EXM 0 DSM 175 DRM 63
ALO OCOH AL1 0 OFS 1 END
```

```
BEGIN AMSC Amstrad PCW 8512 - DSDD 48
tpi 5.25" - DENSITY MFM ,LOW CYLINDERS
40 SIDES 2 SECTORS 9,512
SIDE1 0 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9
SIDE2 1 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9
ORDER SIDES LABEL AMS5
BSH 4 BLM 15 EXM 0 DSM 356 DRM 255
ALO OFOH AL1 0 OFS 1 END
```

```
BEGIN AMSD Amstrad PCW 8512 - DSDD 96
tpi 5.25"
SEE AMS1
```

END

<<Good stuff eh? -Paul>>

BEGIN AMSE Amstrad CPC 6128 - DSDD 48
tpi 5.25" - DENSITY MFM, LOW CYLINDERS
40 SIDES 2 SECTORS 9,512
SIDE1 0 65,66,67,68,69,70,71,72,73
SIDE2 1 65,66,67,68,69,70,71,72,73
ORDER SIDES
BSH 4 BLM 15 EXM 1 DSM 175 DRM 127
ALO OCOH AL1 0 OFS 2 END

BEGIN AMSF Amstrad CPC 6128 - DSDD 96
tpi 5.25" - DENSITY MFM, LOW CYLINDERS
80 SIDES 2 SECTORS 9,512
SIDE1 0 65,66,67,68,69,70,71,72,73
SIDE2 1 65,66,67,68,69,70,71,72,73
ORDER SIDES
BSH 5 BLM 31 EXM 3 DSM 175 DRM 127
ALO 080H AL1 0 OFS 2 END

BEGIN AMSG Amstrad CPC 6128 Side 0 -
SSDD 3.5" - DENSITY MFM, LOW CYLINDERS
80 SIDES 1 SECTORS 9,512
SIDE1 0 193,194,195,196,197,198,199,
200,201
BSH 3 BLM 7 EXM 0 DSM 180 DRM 63
ALO OCOH AL1 0 OFS 0 END

BEGIN AMSH Amstrad CPC 6128 Side 1 -
SSDD 3.5" - DENSITY MFM, LOW CYLINDERS
80 SIDES 2 SECTORS 9,512
SIDE1 0 193,194,195,196,197,198,199,
200,201
SIDE2 0 193,194,195,196,197,198,199,
200,201
BSH 3 BLM 7 EXM 0 DSM 180 DRM 63
ALO OCOH AL1 0 OFS 0
ORDER EAGLE SKIP END

BEGIN AMSI Amstrad CPC464 - SSDD 48
tpi 5.25" - DENSITY MFM, LOW CYLINDERS
40 SIDES 1 SECTORS 9,512 SKEW 5
SIDE1 0 65,66,67,68,69,70,71,72,73
BSH 3 BLM 7 EXM 0 DSM 171 DRM 63
ALO OCOH AL1 0 OFS 2 END

BEGIN AMSJ Amstrad CPC464 - SSDD 96
tpi 5.25" - DENSITY MFM, LOW CYLINDERS
80 SIDES 1 SECTORS 9,512 SKEW 5
SIDE1 0 65,66,67,68,69,70,71,72,73
BSH 5 BLM 31 EXM 3 DSM 87 DRM 127
ALO 080H AL1 0 OFS 2 END

BEGIN AMSK Amstrad PCW w/DU49 - DSDD
3.5" - DENSITY MFM, LOW CYLINDERS 80
SIDES 2 SECTORS 10,512 SKEW 2
SIDE1 0 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10
SIDE2 1 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10
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<<Thanks Ron and Ian for FAQ. -Paul>>

THE Givers

By
ISOBEL
OWADE

Dateline 2323 August.

After the excitement of the arrival of the alien space ship subsides, the world's leaders begin to plan how to exploit the Visitors.

CONCLUSION

Remo went straight back to the space-ship to find Archoo. This time, he was alone with the alien and decided to tackle the question immediately, but before he could speak, Archoo said,

"Remo Barr, may we begin our visiting now? My brothers grow impatient."

"Er, well - um, I suppose it'll be alright." Remo wasn't at all sure it would be. Nevertheless, all arrangements were made to fly seven Visitors to the most important centres of the largest cities to meet World Congress leaders.

The eighth, Archoo, accompanied by Remo was taken to meet The Boss.

After the introductions and formalities were over, The Boss began to question Archoo.

"As you know, er-" He studiously avoided mentioning the Visitor's name.

"As you know, I am in a position to offer certain, shall we say, concessions for trading - etcetera." Archoo opened one eye very slightly and addressed Remo directly.

"I do not understand etcetera."

Remo remained silent as his Boss said loudly, as if to an elderly deaf person,

"It just means, well... anything you may require that we can supply. Trade. We give you something, you give us something. Trade," he repeated unnecessarily.

The Visitor waved his third arm in salute.

"Ah, I understand. Even now, my brothers are negotiating -trade."

The Boss whispered:

"Are they telepathic?"

Remo thought he sounded a little nervous, completely out of character.

"We communicate only with each other," Archoo said quietly, startling both men.

"What have you to offer?"

The Boss was on his own ground here.

"That depends. You must understand that we have to know more about you and what's on the table from your end."

Archoo's sparse eyebrows moved independantly as he said:

"I find your reference to a table incomprehensible. What table are you refering to? I am sorry if I misunderstand."

Remo winced as his Boss moved forward.

"Maybe I can explain?" he interposed and relaxed as the big man moved away and lit a cigaroon which the Visitor immediately grabbed and crushed in his hand. The Boss was so surprised that he didn't move an inch.

Remo's jaw dropped as the alien said: "Why do you wish to kill yourself?"

The Boss regaining his composure replied nastily, "Not myself at this moment."

Remo watched the Visitor carefully, but couldn't detect any reaction to the reply.

"Shall we get back to the negotiations?" Remo asked in his best diplomat's voice.

"All I want to know is--," The Boss was interrupted by Archoo's soft tones.

"We know what you want, but cannot supply weapons."

"They are bloody telepathic!"

Remo thought so too and tried desperately to think of nothing.

"No, we are not," Archoo was quite emphatic. "Other races have wanted exactly the same."

Both men said simultaneously:

"Other races!"

"My brothers are completing their missions, as I must complete mine. We cannot stay too long among you."

The V-phone buzzed. Voices and faces clamoured for attention.

"Filter out," The Boss grunted at the screen.

An Asian face appeared. It was Kwen, the Chinese Number One and a distant cousin of The Boss. Nepotism meant strength.

"What are they giving you?"

Kwen surprised both men, he wasn't usually so direct. The Boss, looking carefully at Archoo said:

"Nothing yet. And you?"

"Nothing - they only talk of departing soon. This one will not go from this room. I have many guests here to receive them."

Kwen sounded petulant as he turned to indicate his large office where, behind a large wall window, people stood waiting looking bewildered.

"Hold. I'll be back."

The Boss, chewing his unlit cigaroon to shreds said, "Next?"

A darker face, also resembling The Boss appeared and told the same story. One by one, the rest of the Leaders reported exactly corresponding reports. At the end, The Boss' cigaroon was a soggy mess and Remo sat slumped in his chair - worn out.

Archoo broke the silence.

"Turn on your large communication device."

"He means the Tri-Vee." Remo said wearily.

"I know." The larger man switched on the wall screen.

A Visitor appeared, almost identical to the rest, the exception being that his eyes were wide open. They were deep, dark black. No light reflected from them and to each watcher those eyes seemed to be directed into their own. Remo, his Boss and the rest of the world leaned closer to the screens and watched in fascination.

"I am what you call a Leader of my people." The black eyes caught and held everyone. Wide open and unblinking.

"We have watched this world for many of your centuries and now you must make ready to receive our gift to you all."

"Here it comes," The Boss and his various cousins began counting their bank credits in anticipation of the profits that might be made.

"Our gift to you is honesty."

Remo couldn't move and The Boss' face registered total disbelief.

"Is that all?" He barked.

"Honesty..... What the hell does that mean?" He punched the desk.

"Explain yourself, you... you..."

He spluttered to a stop and Remo handed him a glass of water which he drank in one gulp.

"Water!?" he bellowed. "Give me a proper drink."

Remo gave him a large glass and helped himself too.

"Well, I'm waiting."

The Boss glared at the screen where the alien hadn't moved a muscle. His eyes stared back at the big man as he said again:

"Honesty - our gift to you."

He saluted with a wave of his third arm:

"This is the greatest contribution we have made to all the races we have encountered on our journey through the Universe. We wish you well."

With those words, he disappeared from the screen. Around the world, the other Visitors also disappeared as did the space ship from the M&S car park.

Remo Barr and The Boss sat in puzzled silence. Then Remo said,

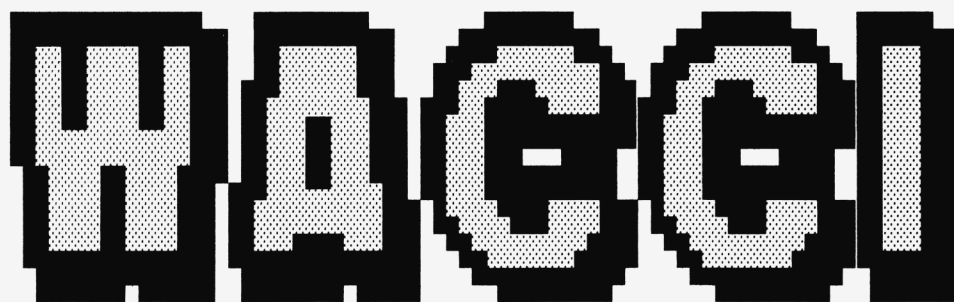
"You're a swine - a cruel, evil despot. I resign."

He walked out of the office and flew away over the towns and cities where people were being totally honest with each other. There was absolute chaos. Nothing would ever be the same again in a world where everyone was incapable of telling a lie.

The Givers (c) Isobel Swade 1995



GREAT



SERIES OF YEARS GONE BYEEEE

SLIPPED DISCS 2

By John Keneally

<Remember my subtle(?) hint that all would be explained this month ? Read on -Ed> What's it all about then ? Right, hold on to your hats. This TechTips of February 1988 was all about analysing the program to read Sector ID Blocks given a couple of months before in December 1987. You will need that in front of you to follow it through from the start at READID.

READID

It is assumed the routine is being called from Basic, so register IX will hold the memory address of any Basic parameters supplied. In other words, if you do:

```
CALL READID,track
```

then IX points to a memory location holding the value of 'track'. So D is loaded with track number, and E with drive number before calling SEEK.

SEEK

Look ahead to SEEK and you will see that it uses a BIOS routine (number 7) to move the disc head onto the track selected. It also switches on the disc motor so, when a little later in READID we disable interrupts, we can be sure the motor will stay on whilst the ID blocks are read off the disc. The point is that when you switch the motor on, it stays on until the interrupt routine decides, after a delay, to switch it off again. If the interrupt is disabled, it just stays on.

GETID

The next routine called is GETID, which tries to read the first sector ID it comes across. The disc is rotating all the time, so the sector ID that is read just depends on what part of the disc is under the head when GETID is called. Anyway, READID

reads a 7-byte block in to memory addressed by HL if there is an ID, otherwise it sets the carry flag to show that the track is empty.

PROGRESS

To progress further we need to know how GETID works. All disc operations begin with a command byte sent to the disc port, followed by one, or more, information bytes. The command to read ID blocks is one of the simplest as it only needs a single extra byte holding the drive-number. However, sending command bytes to the controller is not write as simple as just writing it to the port - you have to make sure the controller is ready to receive it, and this is all taken care of in the SENDC routine.

SENC

In fact, there are really two ports involved, the Status port and the Data port. The Data port is addressed when bit 0 of the port address in BC is set, as you will see by looking at what happens to register C just after label SNDC1.

The first thing SENDC does, then, is to read the status. Only when bit 7 is set will the controller be ready. After that we must check whether it is expecting to send a byte to the computer or receive one from it. Bit 6 indicates this. The status bits in full are as follows:

STATUS_PORT

Bit 0 |
Bit 1 | _indicate if drives 0 to 3
Bit 2 | respectively are busy i.e.
Bit 3 | moving from track to track.
Bit 4 ---means the controller is in
the middle of a command.
Bit 5 ---means the controller is in
the execution phase, i.e.
actually carrying out the
command.
Bit 6 ---means the controller is ready
to send a byte.
Bit 7 ---means the controller is ready
to receive a byte.

And so, the computer is sat there waiting until the controller is ready. Then it goes to the label SNDC1 to send the command - or data byte - out to the Data port. Finally, it waits a short time to let things settle down.

RSLPH

Returning to GETID, we've now simply got to wait for the controller to respond to the command (i.e. do the Execution phase), and then the results can be obtained from the controller. This is done in the RSLPH routine.

First we must obviously wait until there is data ready to be sent. This is done in the loop around RSLP1. The data byte can be read and stored in HL. Next we read the Status port again and check if bit 4 is still set, i.e. that the command is not yet finished because there is more data to get. Finally, the stored results are checked to see if there were any errors.

STATUS WORDS

Remember that there are 7 bytes read in the Results phase of the Read ID

command. The first three are status words (don't confuse these with the status port), then follows the ID block proper containing track number (T), head number (H), sector number (S), and length (N). The length byte is a power of 2, i.e. 0 means 128-byte sectors, 1 means 256-byte sectors, 2 means 512-byte sectors, etc.

I suppose you'd also like to know the status word contents. The 3 read are usually termed ST0, ST1, and ST2.

ST0

Bits 0 & 1 - Drive select bits.
 Bit 2 - Head address.
 Bit 3 - Drive not ready.
 Bit 4 - Drive fault signal.
 Bit 5 - Indicates SEEK has finished.
 Bits 6 & 7 - Termination code bits.

If both zero, command was done normally. If b7=0 and b6=1, the command was started but not finished normally (the other bits show why). If b7=1 and b6=0, it was an invalid command. If both are 1, the drive 'ready' signal changed, (e.g. due to the disc being removed).

ST1

Bit 0 - Missing address mark.
 Bit 1 - Write protected.
 Bit 2 - No data, cannot find sector or ID block.
 Bit 4 - Overrun, computer didn't respond fast enough.
 Bit 5 - CRC error in data.
 Bit 7 - Attempt to read/write beyond end of track.

ST2

Bit 0 -Missing addr. mark (data field)
 Bit 1 -Bad track.
 Bit 4 -Wrong track.
 Bit 5 -CRC error in data.
 Bit 6 -'Deleted data' sector.

PUTTING IT TO WORK

Well, I hope this hasn't been too garbled. It's great fun finding out how your discs are arranged; all you need is a few lines of Basic to type in a track number, call the routine, and print the contents of IDBUF. You could even show the results for all tracks graphically without too much difficulty. Bye. *John Keneally.*

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