

# CPC

## UNDERCOVER

May/June  
1994  
Issue 5  
Only 80p  
(plus an SAE)

### INSIDE

Check out the  
l a t e s t  
adventures with  
Jo Wood.

Soundtraker  
reviewed.

Could we bear  
Ball Bearing?

Paul Fairman  
goes Back To  
Basics.

And loads more....

Chill Out And  
Catch Our  
Wicked Review  
Of Soundtraker.  
Sorted.



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By Jo Wood.

If it's out, it's in

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interesting read"  
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Undercover by The  
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## Important

The copydate for articles and  
advertisements is 10th June.

## Advertising Rates

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# The Editorial

The Editor  
with general  
chat and  
thanks.

If you turn the page and read the latest CPC news (Hold on! Not just now.) you will come across an "exclusive". There's a chap called Kevin Thacker who has been blasted by WACCI for ripping off PD software. Kev claims that it isn't piracy which of course it is. However my view on this whole affair is mixed. I don't see any harm in tearing chunks out of software, PD or not, as long as you do it in the comfort of your own home and don't sell it or give

to anybody because this is unacceptable. But say you wanted a program that you couldn't buy and you had limited programming knowledge but knew the basics. If you knew that by putting together a few bits of prewritten code together would allow you to "write" a new program to suit your needs then would it be fair to stop them? As long as the software is not given away in any form at all for money or for free then surely there is no harm at all because nobody has lost anything so why

bother?

Anyway onto a lighter note. it would be appreciated if anybody could help me with reviews. You don't have to write too much just around 400 words if you like. Just think your name in print... Exciting thoughts, eh?

Finally take a squizz at Richard Stevens' column. If you have any opinions about anything then write an article and we'll print it if its good enough. It's your chance to have a rant and rave.



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Write to above address enclosing a SAK in order to obtain a copy of the catalogue which includes details of how to order. And watch this space for further developments. You know it makes sense.

# Bits and Pieces

## Time Runs Out FAST For Thacker The Hacker

Super hacker Kevin Thacker has been publically condoned by WACCI for alleged illegal hacking of PD programs.

Large user group WACCI, issued a notice warning Thacker to "Go away!" Mike Lyons, WACCI's letters editor, informed his readers that the Federation Against Software Theft (FAST) had been notified.

The verbal attack occurred in the March 1994 issue of WACCI which carried a sample of a letter from Kevin Thacker in which he wrote, "I can steal any code, graphics or music" and "the programs I steal the code from are PD, so it is not illegal."

The magazine cut the letter short by issuing a biting reply.

"The removal of code from PD programs is, I believe, prohibited by the terms of Public Domain," said Mr. Lyons. "I am in serious doubt as to the guy's sanity as he's actually printed

his full address in a letter which admits to ripping-off someone else's software. Expect "the boys" to call around at your (Kevin's) front door any day now. Perhaps FAST might live up to its name for once."

This came shortly after Amstrad Action's four page article regarding the pirating of software. Under EC law it is now legal to copy copyrighted software for the purchasers own use only as back-ups. Whether or not Thacker is selling the pirated code is a matter to be resolved.

However Thacker has issued a disc filled with information on programming. Although CPC Undercover has not yet seen a copy it could contain information on how to carry out the actions he has been condemned for.

### See Editorial

## Crazy Craven

Phil Craven is continuing to annoy people with his insistence in not sending out his mail order supplies.

Our advice would be to write to Amstrad Action after twenty-eight days and repeatedly pester Craven. Perhaps phone his brother and Pam Harris, the previous Avatar proprietor (allegedly). Taking him to court may be an answer but up to now he has failed to appear in court and ignores summons.

## Crystal X

Crystal X Software, Angela Swinbourne's company has agreed to let us sell seven of her games. They are Cloaker, Pacifist, Sector 5, General X, PZP, Mantis and Justice and they cost £2 (Justice is £3) plus a DISC and SAE. Cheques payable to David Crookes to the normal address.

## Got No Discs?

Maxwell, the last sellers of 3" discs, have ceased production. CPCU has been informed that prices are likely to

rise. However you can still buy cheap second hand discs from a variety of suppliers which is recommended.

## Typing

Being able to type pretty quickly is a handy skill to have unless you want to spend a few months typing in a two hundred word piece of prose or something.

"Typing" is a program that can save you a lot of money in tuition fees since it shows you how to type.

Fifty exercises are provided and each section starts off with a drill which tells you about the home keys and where to position your fingers on the keyboard. Once you have grasped that it gives you a small game where you have to press the letter which flashes up on the screen. Then you can try the exercises. It asks you to copy a piece of writing which is displayed on screen. It ignores the wrong letters and so doesn't slow you down.

It's not a bad program but I feel it should have had a timer to time how long it takes you to type. But for a grasp of the skills it provides a good (if quite dull) way of learning the basics.

## Keyboard

### Training Program

Keyboard Training Program or KTP for short is another typing tuition program.

Because it is only a six kilobyte program it doesn't have the same amount of features as the Typing program and is definitely not as comprehensive.

Having said that, though, it does have some advantages over the previously named program. It has a timer so you can see how far behind proper touch typists you are. It is a less dull program as well.

Again it has the standard game (a letter is presented on screen and you have to press the corresponding key) as well as the copying of a passage which, as mentioned is timed.

Overall if you want a nicely presented and not to heavy program then I advice you get hold of Keyboard Training Program.

## Comparison

Typing	70%
Keyboard TP	73%

I preferred RTP to Typing because of RTP's timer and less dull approach. However Typing is a lot more comprehensive. You decide.

## Powerpage Borders

This has been around for quite a while but it has never been mentioned in CPC Undercover so here goes.

It has been produced by Tim Blackburn of Artificial Intelligence fame and he wore out a load of Beatles tapes in the process. Allegedly.

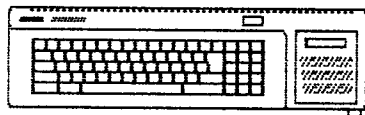
Anyway it is a collection of nicely drawn borders for use in Powerpage to spruce up your newsletters, posters and flysheets. Well just about anything you want them for really.

There's a jagged border, a chain one, Tudor, Turkish and olde ones. There is actually something that everybody could make some use of and it makes a change from a single line or even no border at all.

It comes highly recommended. 87%

## Wanted

Writers to review Public Domain software. Please send any reviews either on paper, disc (ASCII files please) or as Powerpage files. Free copy of CPCU for you.



# Soundtrækker 1.1

You can make sweet music together with your CPC but of course you knew that already. You can buy lots of music packages to help you. But you probably knew that too. Joe Moulding checks Soundtrækker out and it sounds (shem) good.

Soundtrækker is one of those complicated music makers, with long lists of numbers which stand for notes (similar to Bootrækker). There are four examples on the disc - load these up and prepare to be amazed. You'll need to spend a while getting used to Soundtrækker, but once you've figured it out, you'll realise that it's an extremely versatile system.

Each song is made up of a number of "patterns", and each pattern is made up of 64 "positions". Each position consists of either a note or blank space.

Each key on the keyboard represents a note, and you enter notes by pressing these keys. You can either enter notes one by one (which I find the easiest), or using the record function, where you play the notes you want and the computer works out the timing for you. It's also nice and

easy to copy parts of your song.

Ten instruments are provided on the disc, including flutes, pianos and percussion. One of the most impressive features is the instrument editor, which lets you make your own instruments (difficult) or edit

those provided. Probably the most useful feature, though, is the arpeggio editor, letting you use chords or trills in your pieces. You can also change the tempo at any time during the songs. Sometimes you'll find that you can't get the speed just right, it's either too fast or too slow, so I feel that the programmer should have enabled a larger choice of tempo.

## Four Simple Steps To Writing Your Own Fab Song

1. Load in some instrument to use. A maximum of 16 instruments can be used per song. Always have at least one piano and a flute (for the melody) and a couple of drums.

2. Compose a melody. At this stage, it's most convenient to have a piano in the house. Just doodle about, playing any old note, and sooner or later you'll come up with a well cool tune. If this sounds too hard, however, you could always follow Chris Goodswen's example and rip off a song by your favourite band. You never know, if you have such bad taste as J.M. Jarre, your end product will probably be better than the real thing.

3. Add a base line. Dead easy, this one. Just add a few low notes to make a fuller sound to the music. If this is too complicated, why not take a look at the examples provided on the disc. If you find a decent one, pinch it.

4. Add percussion. Simply chuck a few snares in here and there. Now if that's too hard, go back to bed.



# Coverdisc 5

**TIP:** Try to always use channel A for the melody, B for the bass and C for the percussion. It's a lot less confusing.

A music maker is pointless, though, if other people can't listen to your song too, but once again this had been thought of, and a compiler is included so that you can load and play songs in your own BASIC or machine code programs.

An extensive manual is provided, making it a very professional program indeed. Help pages are included in the main program so you don't need to keep referring to the manual. It has to be said, it's only rivals are Digitrakker and Protrakker (both Public Domain) but Soundtrakker is superior to these thanks to it being easy to use and 64k compatible.

To get the most from Soundtrakker you really need to be genuinely interested in music. Basically if you just want to mess about you'd be better off sticking with PD alternatives. With any music maker, though, you'll need to be prepared to spend a good few days getting used to it.

Joe Moulding

**94%**

## Les Mings

You've heard of Lemmings and you must know the concept (ie. guide a few little Lemmings to safety by building a safe path).



And guess what? No we haven't got Lemmings on the disc (or else we'd be sued for infringement of copyright) but we have got this PD alternative which is just as good.

What you have to do is guide the King Ming to safety rather than a set number of Lemmings. To set the King on his way, first set out a safe route then click on the red Ming in the options. He'll then appear. The rest of the options are quite easy to follow. There's a stair builder, tunnel digger and Ming freezer.

## Boxine

This is a fun little game in which you can get out your frustration on some willing set of pixels. Use the joystick or keys to guide your man on his quest to beat up his opponent.

## E-Crypt

E-Crypt is a puzzle game from Sleepwalker PD and a good one it is too. It hardly seems worth giving the instructions here since they are included in the game.

## Banker

Regular readers will remember that in the last issue Jo Wood reviewed an home accounts package called Banker.

What it does is make your financing chores that little bit easier. You can deal with

standing orders and the like so it should cater for your needs. It's easy to use too.

The first thing I advise you to do is press key 9 as this will give you some instructions on how to use it.

## Tape Users

If you haven't got a disc drive then you'll be pleased to know that you can buy CPCU with a covertape from Sleepwalker PDS for only £2.

The Covertape Is Sponsored By Sleepwalker PDS

**THE WIZARD  
PRESENTS**

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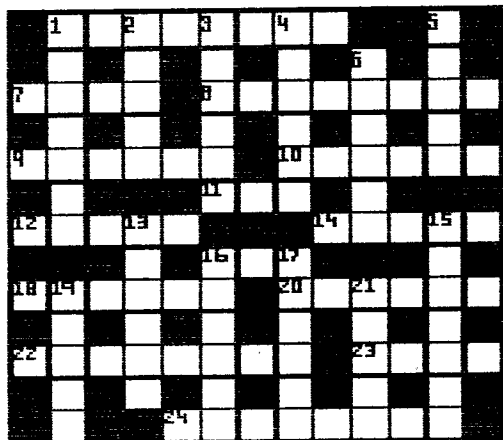
## 'ENIGMA UNDERCOVER'

WIN TWO DISCS OF PD

Here's the second of our great competitions in which one of you lucky readers can win not one but two PD discs.

Once you've worked out the answers either cut out the grid or write down the answers on a piece of paper and send it to: Enigma Undercover, 37 Trimmingham Drive, Bury, Lancs. BL8 1JW. The closing date is the 10th June 1994. Winners may be published in issue 6.

Last issues winner was Richard Wilson from Rochdale. Well done.



### ACROSS

- 1 It's sad if you ACT in this way? (8)
- 7 A WORD in your ear? Perhaps not? (4)
- 8 TRANSDUCERS on a podium? (8)
- 9 Do you PLAN this drawing? (5)
- 10 I admire you! No more? (2,4)
- 11 Do you go into the BASE 10 times to give it the chop? (3)
- 12 Is he a bit of a card? Old FC! (5)
- 14 Little Arthur or a US Code? (5)
- 16 Type this for a telephone book? (3)
- 18 Move FORWARDS in Italy? (6)
- 20 PUSH into this default data store? (1,5)
- 22 Ed! Is he one of the thieves? (1,7)
- 23 A POP GROUP in a dreadful place? (4)
- 24 I consumed this ANIMAL in secret? (3,5)

### DOWN

- 1 The communicating British? (7)
- 2 Its almost a rubber pop group?
- 3 Did he get pressure with this language? (8)
- 4 You can go grey with this process? (6)
- 5 A triangular wooden rail? (5)
- 6 With these abilities its almost like taking a life?
- 13 The sixties drums are his? (6)
- 15 In rhyme or totally opposite? (7)
- 16 Sounds like a magnetic biscuit?
- 17 A well known word for kidnapers? (5)
- 19 Sing the praises of Undercover with this? (5)
- 21 Its a rough ride in the west? (5)

If the wizard can conjure something up, there will be another puzzle soon.



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# Cheap Thrills

A Publicly  
Speaking  
Special

Guess what? Cheap Thrills is going to be a regular column dealing with PD games. If you have any PD game reviews or indeed serious reviews then send them in and if we publish it, you can have a free copy of the mag.

## Tomb

If you like simple games just oozing with immense playability then you'll love tomb.

It is not really the best game ever invented and the gameplay isn't actually all that stunning but it will keep you occupied for an hour or so.

It's a maze game where you have to guide

your little man around the screen avoiding nasties and collecting keys which open doors (logic is just so amazing).

The graphics are good enough for this type of game and everything moves at a nice pace. It's certainly a challenge although after a few goes you'll get the hang of it.

Take the trouble to find this game. It's worth it. 67%

## Dizzy Starline & The Gowong Computers

What a long title. Hold on! This 'aint the Dizzy, is it? Not the little egg which you would just love to make scrambled eggs from? Well actually there isn't any resemblance whatsoever between the two games.

Dizzy Starline etc. is a strategy game and a puzzling one at that. You have to deliver consignments of "Gowong" computers in each sector and you must visit 49 sectors

in 49 galactic days and deliver on certain dates and not go on the same sector twice and only move from a limit of controls. Phew!

To move your ship you have to enter co-ordinates which some people may see as a turn off but you shouldn't because although the game is hard to explain it is good and you should buy it. 82%



## Madmazes

Hmmm. I wonder what this game could be about. I mean the name doesn't give too much away does it? Well actually it doesn't because it doesn't mention that it is a damn fine game.

It's different to Tomb. In this you have to collect gold stars which are needed and red stars which you want. There are powerpills and obstacles. Even walls. Wow. Oh and there's a character called Mr. Mad (could be why it's called Madmazes).

What you do is travel around a maze encountering the above things that have been mentioned and then progress to the next level for more of the same. If a nastie touches you, you lose one of your four lives.

Control is by keys which doesn't detract from the gameplay at all and still keeps it as one of the best PD games you can find in the PD Libraries and one to get. 83%

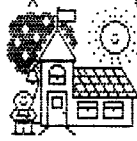
# Back To BASIC's

Some more gripping programming stuff from the man that knows - Paul Fairman. He's going to show you how to manipulate variables. Ooer!

Last month we finished by talking about the INKEY command and how INKEY\$ wasn't a variable. Well now we can move onto variable manipulation.

Variables are of great use to the programmer. Without them, life would be impossible, the power to hold information in the memory is vital for other usage within the program. The variables can be altered using a suite of commands that don't use keywords, although you could use the LET command.

The variable x equals 2. Let's say that we no longer wish that x does equal 2, and think how it



could be changed to 5 for example. Easy you say. Just give a x=5 command and x is changed but not to a specific number but an actual alteration of it. We want to add something to x, subtract etc, etc.

x=x+3 will take the variable x and tells

BASIC that it equals x (which it obviously does already) plus 5. Instead of x=2, x=x+5, x=8 not 3 anymore. The same can be done to subtract numbers from a variable.

x=x-3 will subtract 3 from x. You will notice that there is no divide sign on the keyboard although it is part of the ASCII character set, and the multiplication sign is "X" usually but BASIC uses different symbols to indicate such signs. An asterisk (\*) means times and a / is divide.

As discussed previously there are other variable types. The string variable such as v\$ can have another string added to it.

With all these sums, it's like being at school. v\$=v\$+q\$ will add the string q\$ onto THE END of the variable v\$.

On the Amstrad CPC 6128 there is an advantage of a few more more BASIC programming commands. There are CLEAR INPUT, COPYCHR\$ (not a variable), CURSOR, FILL, FRAME, GRAPHICS PAPER, GRAPHICS PEN, and MASK,

so 464 users will not be able to use those commands. The CURSOR command is a 6128 only command and, if we added the line at the beginning of the program, would print the block cursor on the screen.

## 15 CURSOR 1

will do the job and CURSOR 0 will turn the cursor off. A similar key word to INKEY\$ is INKEY. Again 6128 users have the upper hand (good programme) as on the disk drive of the computer at the top is a diagram of the keyboard with lots of numbers in place of the letters and numbers etc. These are the numbers used by INKEY. Now, all the keys on the keyboard have a status of -1 but if you should hold down on key then the status will no longer become -1.

```
10 IF INKEY(47)<>-1
   THEN 20 KLSK 10
20 PRINT:PRINT"You
   just pressed the
   space bar"
```

The key number you are referring to must be in brackets (SHIFT and 8/9) and those characters after the ) "<>" is the opposite

of the equals sign "=", so the program looks at the status of KEY 47 (the space bar) and if it doesn't equal -1, in other words the key is pressed, then jump over to line 20 ELSE GOTO 10. You could write ELSE GOTO 10, or in previous programming examples IF a\$="SAUSAGE" THEN GOTO 10 but the GOTO's can be dropped if you are a lazy sod like myself. To cut the explanation down, the program above tells you that you pressed the space bar, if you did. You can test for all the other keys in the same way.

### Saving and Loading

Now if you should come to the stage of actually wanting to save your program to tape or disc, then a command or two are provided by BASIC. First of all it is advised that the reader keeps on reading CPC Undercover in the months to come since I will be covering tapes and discs in a forthcoming column.

The commands are cunningly titled LOAD and SAVE (damned devious buggers these computer inventors, eh - David). To save the program use SAVE"filename" where

filename is a name of your choice. A suffix can be added to give other functions as listed below:

**.P** - will protect the file. MUST be RUN not LOADED. Upon returning to BASIC the program deletes itself. Do not use on programs that you wish to edit in future unless you have a program that will de-protect such files. There are programs available that will override this simple protection system (sort of defeats the whole point really - David).

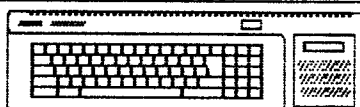
**.A** - saves the program as an ASCII text file.

**.B** - saves the program as a binary file. By using: SAVE"filename",b,&c000,&4000 the entire screen will be "dumped" to the disc.

LOAD"filename" will load in the program under the filename specified in inverted commas. The load command automatically deletes the other program (if any) before loading. It must be run with RUN although you can automatically LOAD and RUN a program with RUN"filename".

### GOSUB and RETURN

Next on the list is GOSUB and RETURN. The RETURN command has nothing to do with the RETURN key on computers



Saving and loading requires a disc or tape - allegedly

(not 464). GOSUB is similar to GOTO in the fact that by saying to the computer GOSUB 500, would instruct BASIC to jump to line 5000. The code from line 5000 and afterwards would then be acted upon and when the RETURN command is seen, BASIC jumps back to the very next command directly after the GOSUB one. GOSUB means go to a SUB-routine. GOSUB and RETURN are two statements that have saved a lot of typing in the past because the same routine was needed for many different parts of the program, and so by GOSUBing to this part and then RETURNing from it proved a great help.

Structured programming is what you should be aiming for, not programs that render themselves impossible to follow through, and use bad programming techniques to obtain the results quickly. Routines help this and if you haven't yet caught on, routines consist of the GOSUB and RETURN commands. Have fun. Paul



# Publically Speaking



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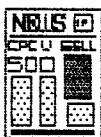
If you want to splash out lots of cash on things you can get for almost nothing then that's up to you but the rest of us are more sensible and read this column to find out the latest good stuff to be had.

## Tiny DTP

Tiny DTP is shareware so if you like it you are supposed to send a few pennies to the author for extra instructions. Your money's safe then since this program is definitely not as good as some PD DTP ones around like Powerpage for one.

normal standard screen. Copying blocks of the screen is sooooo slow that it is really not worth doing if you want to enlarge it.

You can draw lines and fill things so it is quite flexible in that department although there isn't an undo function at all.



It needs 128k and therefore the use of the Design Your Own Paper! program on your CP/M disc. There are eleven options from which to choose such as write, art, printout, size and font.

Print outs were not terribly good and a bit draft looking but they serve their purpose. There's a second print option that only uses one pin and is of a very good standard.

You can load text into the program or type it onto the screen. However when loading text in, I found that all of the commas were missed out. The text can be in a variety of sizes, though, and it can be justified.

In comparison with other DTP programs, Tiny PD just doesn't rate. There are just too many flaws like the fact that although you can use five fonts on the screen, you can't, as far as I could see, load in any .CHR files and loading in clip art as 17k screens is a bit troublesome. On the whole Tiny PD is just that - in other words small time. 55%

Clip art can only be used on the condition that you save it as a

## Alyssa

This is a very handy program. It's a database which lets you store information about your discs. Now if you only have a few discs this isn't for you but if you, like I, have quite a collection then being able to access a database which tells you where a 1k program that you really need is, is very handy.

Anyway it structures like this: program name, format, side, number, type and tag.

Editing the files you create is very easy and it is also quite fast which makes a change from playing about with Tiny DTP (See left).

It's true that you can use proper databases like Rambase 3, for instance, and that would do the job just fine but I feel that you would be better served with this database for it is very professionally put together and will turn your disc collection from a mess to very organised. 78%

# Page Publisher



£25 (10% discount for CPC Undercover readers)

This is yet another DTP package but this one is a commercial one from that superb company, SD Microsystems (one of the only companies with a fast delivery record). The Wizard checks it out with a wave of his wand.

First of all, I feel I must warn you! This program has some peculiarities compared perhaps to 'Powerpage' which you might be used to. Be careful when designing your works of art on other packages, because it clips the right and bottom edge by two and four rows respectively. You have been warned!

On loading, you are presented with a nice array of easy-to-read icons, with a very comprehensive set of drop-down menu's. Blimey! where do I start? Well if you think I'm going through this lot, you're joking! You'll have to take my word a buy it yourselves. (No, I'm not on a commission for SD!).

And yes! AA was right, (of course), it is slow in various places, so choose your cursor speeds carefully. There is everything that you may need to set out a nice display. I was well impressed, but at the same time, saddened by the fact that it didn't have a 'ZOOM' ability!! Agggggghhh!! This is so handy for clearing up

mistakes in your work!

It also lacks an 'AUTOWRAP' facility? Oh no! Sorry! You mean I can't blend my text around the graphics? Sorry! But yes! How sad?

I did write to SD about these missing articles, and got quite a stropky letter back, stating that you couldn't have everthing on 128k? Doesn't say a lot for OPC Art Studio, does it?

It is a shame though, that it lacks these important factors. What do you think? Perhaps you could let David know? What about it, eh?

Despite these drawbacks, it is a nice program! You just need to work at it very hard, and switch off if you are in the Powerpage mode. (? - Dave)

Just digressing slightly, if we go back to the clipping of the piccy edges for a moment, (What! you haven't read it?), if you take a snapshot of the screen with M'face, you can load this into your art package and you can then, work within it's screen area! O.K? What!

You haven't got a Multiface? Well hurry up then, before they runout!!

There was one especially nice point I liked, and that was the 'Electronics Symbols' in the 'Patterns Menu'. If you're a budding electronics genius then this is for you! I must admit as well though, that the Clip Art disk that comes free, (should be £12!) with the program is BEAUTIFUL!! There's some cracking piccy's, including a few DIGI one's as well!!

At the risk of repeating myself and boring the pants of you.....It should have contained Pixel Magnification. It is a pain to remove a small portion of a line etc; without it.

But despite all of this, Page Publisher is a good program although it is not as good as Microdesign+ or Stop Press. Having said that it's worth getting.

Cheers for now!

The  
Wizard

75%

# What's going on?

When every other Amstrad publication dies off leaving just one newsstand one alive, you expect the remaining one to be the best. It was, but not now says Richard Stevens. Why? Read on...

There were once four CPC publications adorning the shelves of my newsagent up the road from me. But there was only one that was worth its salt and that was Amstrad Action - a magazine which delivered brilliant reviews and features with an undying, if tiresome, air of humour.

That was then and this is now: AA the only survivor and supporter of CPC computers. However it may have outlasted the rest but it certainly doesn't deliver the goods any more.

When I first started to buy AA it had a hundred pages packed with interesting Amstrad articles. But look at it now. Fifty-two pages at twice the price although to be fair, it does have a covertape. A good thing? It is if the software on it is worth having.

The May 1994 issue carried two programs.

Uridium and the AA Toolbox. I remember when the reason for hiking the price from £2.45 to £2.95 was because they were going to deliver a tape worth over £20. How much do you reckon the offerings on the May '94 tape is worth? £2. If that? To add insult to injury, the cassette case has been scrapped and instead replaced by a sub-standard cardboard equivalent. What's more, has the price come down at all? Has Rod Lawton shaved off his beard? No. In fact the only thing that has come down is the quality.

Even so, you couldn't really fault the writers for they are a talented set although they seem to just scan over points and don't go too much in depth. Compared to other mags like CPC User, ACU and WACCI, AA is like a tabloid.

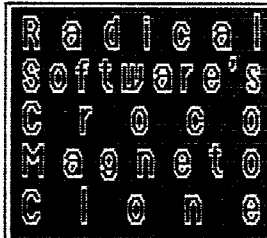
I took a count of the amount of actual reading pages there are in the latest issue. Fourty. Not bad considering the ratio of adverts to editorial in other mags is no where near as

good. Another thing that is impressive is the proportion of colour which was a huge 46 pages. So actually the mag seems to be of a good standard if you ignore the price. But you can't ignore it and the publishers can say all they can about the lack of adverts and so forth but the fact will remain that the majority of readers will not give two hoots about that. After all if they are handing over hard-earned cash they want to see something from it. Perhaps if AA wanted to attract a lot more advertisers, it should lower its prices a bit. ACU didn't seem to have much trouble with finding advertisers.

However it has to be said that AA caters for a dying market and so it is good that there is some support still there but unless they get more pages and have slightly better reviews the readership is going to fall even more. It was 27,000 a year ago and now it's 15,000. At this rate, a year from now and its bye bye AA so come on, get your act together.

# Ball Bearing

£5.99 Available from Sentinel Software



This game got a bit of a bad review from Amstrad Action purely because you can buy the PD version from which it developed (ie. Croco Magneto) for only 20p or so. But ignoring that factor, does Ball Bearing stand up on its own right? Well....

Ball Bearing breaks the game. It really is that scrolling. However there are quite a few nice features which Croco Magneto doesn't have (I had to make a comparison at some stage) like hitting coloured blocks for extra points and energy sapping areas but nevertheless these features don't entirely compensate for the sickening jerks.

You can't always judge a book by its cover says a well known cliché but hey, we're not reviewing a book, are we? No. But the same principle can be applied nonetheless.

control the ball that I realised the game could actually have a few faults. The ball was responsive and fast but it was the scrolling which left a lot to be desired and after around ten attempts I began to feel a bit sick with all the screen jerkiness.

I slipped the disc in the drive and put a CD in the hi-fi and then loaded the game up. After a short while a very nice loading screen popped up with a pretty good tune - it made me turn the sound of the hi-fi off for a few minutes anyway.

Sound is up to a high standard and sets the game off well. It isn't the best music in the world but it's certainly better than most games and it increases the initial grab factor.

A bit more waiting brought me to the game proper and a message said "welcome" with a bubble-like effect in the background. Attention to detail up to now.

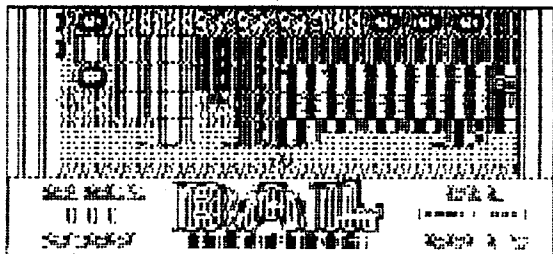
Now gameplay as you may have guessed is the major drawback which is quite sad as it's gameplay which makes or breaks a game, not fancy features, and it has to be said that the playability factor of

The actual game looks quite good with eye-catching and well drawn backgrounds and frankly a very polished and professional job all round. It was only when I tried to

If you can just see this as Ball Bearing.

It is good in its own right though. If you're fed-up with Croco Magneto but did like it then I suggest you play this to check out the extras. For non-fans, leave it and for newcomers get Croco Magneto instead. Boing, boing, oh no, killed again.

Graphics: 80%  
Sound: 76%  
Playability: 68% **79%**



# Lisa Kellett

An Interview  
with AA's  
New Art Bod

Angela Cook goes travelling again to find some other willing person to interview and also jinx as she seems to have done a few times. (Oh dear)

Lisa Kellett is the new art editor on Amstrad Action so I decided that being new on the magazine was not quite complete without the Cook experience...

Lisa is not married, and she is at the young age of twenty (she thinks that for some reason being twenty-five is over the hill!).

Previous to AA, Lisa worked for a year on Commodore Format and Amiga Power. The reasons for Lisa changing magazines are simple. Working on two magazines has two deadlines and I thought it was hard enough with bi-monthly deadlines. Also on CF and AP Lisa was art assistant. She felt she had learned all there was to learn in her position. Lisa was ready for promotion and a new post. Before this Lisa was at college.

On Commodore Format and Amiga Power Lisa's job entailed laying out the pages, drinking coffee, some sizing up of photos,

drinking more coffee and drinking more coffee amongst many other wondrous things.

A lot of people said that AA and CF have very similar approaches. Lisa agreed with this entirely. Lisa also said that she had settled in very well, especially seeing as now the whole of the AA team used to be on Commodore Format. Is there anything strange going on here? Before we know it the AA team will include Andy Hutchinson and Ollie Alderton! (See below-Ed).

I asked Lisa what she was going to change about the style of AA compared to what Andy was doing. "Not a lot. Some of the headings I may just update a little. But other than that, the style suits the magazine perfectly. I like Andy's style, it is similar to my own."

Lisa's favourite colours are red and green. She is a librarian - no, that's not quite right, is it? Lisa's starsign is Libra (That's better - David). Lisa's desk is not always tidy. I don't know why I ask everybody that stupid

question. (Probably because yours is not always very tidy - Angela's Dad). (Ooer. A family argument. - David).

Lisa has a love of travelling. She has been to Australia and Italy, "And all the other ordinary holiday places," she adds. I don't know what an ordinary holiday place is, the only other countries I have been to are Scotland and Wales.

Well that about sums it up for Lisa, apart from the fact that she sounds very nice and will be a great aid to AA. CF and AP don't know what they have lost.

\* Spookily, whenever Angela interviews somebody they nearly always seem to leave the CPC scene. Last month she interviewed Andy Ounsted and he left. Similarly with Lisa, she has now left and the gap is filled by Ollie Alderton who Angie tipped as being a future art bod on this page. Err.. Angela, how would you like to interview Phil Craven?? David





# Adventures



A Beginners Guide By Jo Wood

## New Adventurers

Have you been adventuring since the last issue? If so, I expect you have got to that stage of knowing what you want to do but the game won't let you do it unless you put the command into the right words! For some, this is the challenge of an adventure but personally I find it very frustrating! The more you play adventures the easier you will find it to input words the computer can cope with rather than what you would say normally.

### Which Adventure?

You can play whatever takes your fancy but some games are for the more experienced player and you may end up giving it all up if you start on too hard a game. The Island by Ken Bond in the Public Domain is a good game but if you are a beginner, give it a miss for now as the puzzles are rather torturous! It's best to start on a game that's not too big so it doesn't take months before you get the satisfaction of completing your first adventure!

## REVIEW Lighthouse Mystery by Barrie Eaton

The plot is to find the hidden treasure under the lighthouse on Fang Rock. This is a GACed game with graphics - just as well as the locations are a bit repetitive. You get stuck often and killed but it's a fair trainer for understanding how to input different commands that mean the same thing! The puzzles are logical but you need to LOOK after examining anything to see what you've found - can be a bit of a bind!

Unfortunately you are alone in this game. I must say that I prefer to have more going on in a game with some interaction of characters but it will introduce you to the way puzzles are solved if nothing else! Do SAVE your position and remember to map your way round.

Useful verbs: force, fill, press, smash, tie, move, remove, read, climb, unlock aswell as the usual commands.

Available from The Adventure Workshop

## ON THE TRAIL

### STARFLAM

Smash computer to get chip (needed to get into cell)

Look under desk in General's bedroom for a useful number

### Use Your Loaf

Get a bone from the butcher to placate a dog  
You need to dig up a helmet to wear when flying the hanglider

### The Island

Turn picture frame to get brass key (it opens the locked cabin)

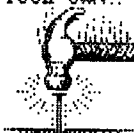
Look under the clothes in the mate's cabin

## HOW TO BEGIN

### SUPASTORE by M & L

Get card, read card, wear pass, east, south, get hammer, west, north, up, south, get key, north, west, south, unlock box file, read paper (gives list of jobs to be done before you can go home)

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO NOW IS WORK OUT HOW TO DO THOSE JOBS - YOU ARE ON YOUR OWN!!



## Where to go:

Adventure Probe  
52 Burford Rd  
LIVERPOOL L16 6AQ

Send £2 cheque payable to Adv Probe for fanzine

## For Software:

Wow Software  
78 Redipole Lane  
WEYMOUTH Dorset  
DT4 9RS

The Adventure Workshop  
36 Gasmere Rd  
ROYTON Oldham  
Lancs OL2 6SR

Send SAE for a catalogue

# ADVENTURE CONTACTS

## PD Libraries

It is worth noting a few libraries that have a decent amount of adventures in them. GD PD has around 18 disc sides of them costing 35p per side! You can't argue with that if you want a cheap introduction to adventures. PD Fun also has about 17 disc sides at 50p per side and MPD have 14 disc sides at 50p a side. It's worth sending a stamped addressed envelope to any of these to see what they have (though I think they all have more or less the same)

## Adventure PD

This used to be run by Debby Howard (who does the Amstrad Action page) but when she closed the library in Sept 93 she passed on the adventures to Dartsma. The PD is now definitely available and the order codes are the same as originally. They cost 50p per disc side and please note that Superstore (see 'How to Begin') is on AMS 11. There are around 22 disc sides to choose from so you should be able to get together a good selection using PD sources.

## New Adventure Library

Moonshine PD run by Martin Greenhalgh is attempting to have previously unreleased software so should be a good source of new adventures. Martin is trying to gather together homebrew adventures, so if you have written any he would be pleased if you would get in touch with him. He hopes to be open for business in a month or so and reckons to be charging 50p per 178k on 3", 31/2" disc or tape. Hopefully, I will be able to review some software from Moonshine next issue!

## Adventure Probe

On to fanzines now and this is a monthly A5 format adventuring fanzine which covers all the computer formats including the 16-bit machines to a small extent. There is always something of interest to the CPC adventurer and personally, I find it interesting to see what's going on with other computers aswell! There are reviews, hints and solutions in addition to a lively letters page.

If you are interested in adventures it does make interesting reading and keeps you up to date with new releases etc. Also you can subscribe to Adventure Probe but it will still cost you £2 a copy.

## The Dragon Magazine

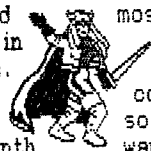
This is Debby Howard's most recent venture (Feb 94 was issue 1) and is a bi-monthly computer hardware, software for sale and wants magazine. There is a lot within its pages for the adventurer including a solutions/maps service and even a solution printed. She has also taken over the adventure finding service that Simon Avery used to run (I expect everyone has at least one of his games!)

If you're trying to locate a particular adventure it's worth getting in touch with her. The magazine costs £1.50 and again you can subscribe.

## The Dragon Magazine

10 Overton Rd  
Abbey Wood  
LONDON SE2 9SD





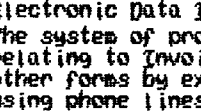
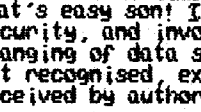


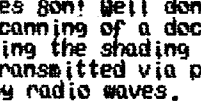
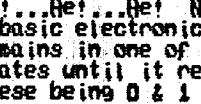
Cheques should be made payable to D. Howard



## PD Library addresses featuring Adventures

GD PD	PD Fun	MPD Software	Moonshine PD
49 Woodville	41 Mitchelgate	23 Nobes Ave	19A Kenyon Ave
BAENSTAPLE	KIRKBY LONSDALE	BRIDGEMARY	WIREHAM
North Devon	Via Carnforth	Gosport	Clwyd
EX31 2HL	Lancs LA6 2BE	Hants PO13 0BS	LL11 2SF

Dartsma 49 Heavitree Rd Plumstead LONDON SE18 7GX

 <b>Monty And Son</b> By The Wizard 	 Dad! What does abbreviation E.D.I mean?	 Great Dad!! What about the next word then, 'ENCRYPTION'?
	 Electronic Data Interchange Son! The system of providing data relating to Invoices, Orders & other forms by exchanging tapes, using phone lines or computers.	 That's easy son! It's used in Security, and involves the changing of data so that it's not recognised, except being received by authorised persons.
	 I think I know this Dad? Is it known as FAX. 'FACSIMILE'?	 I know this as well Dad? Chinese Shoes! 'FLIP-FLOP'?
	 Yes Son! Well done! It is the scanning of a document & convert- ing the shading into signals & transmitted via phone wires or by radio waves. Okay?	 He!...He!...He! No Son! It's a basic electronic circuit which remains in one of two possible states until it receives signals These being 0 & 1 (Off & On) Ok?

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Disc Drive Cleaner Kits (3", 3.5",  
5.25") Please state size. Contains  
cleaning disk and fluid.....£4.00

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a catalogue with an SAE.

SD Microsystems (Dept A), PO Box 24,  
Swaffham, Norfolk, PE37 7UE

# WACCI

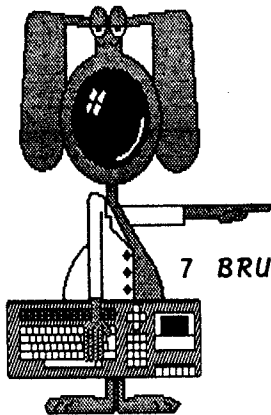
## THE WORLDWIDE AMSTRAD CPC USERS CLUB

### WACCI: THE INSIDE INFO

The club offers its members not only the best CPC magazine for the serious user but...

- \* Public Domain Software Library
- \* Homegrown Software Library
- \* Book Library
- \* Tape Software Library
- \* Telephone Helplines
- \* And much much more...

*If you own an Amstrad CPC and are serious about your computing, then WACCI is the Club for you.*



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