WACCI

WACCI TOURS

CLUB I

SPECTRUM

YOUR

LOCAL

EIGHT BIT

BUS

CONTENTS

THE BENEFITS OF WACCI MEMBERSHIP

* The best magazine for serious CPC users.
* An INDEX of the above from issue 1 - 81.
* 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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PRODUCTION METHOD

WACCI is typeset, produced, edited and laid out
using, Protext, Promerge, Prospell, MicroDesign
Plus on the CPC 6128 and printed using an Epson
Stylus 800 InkJet Printer.

WACCI is printed and collated by: ProntaPrint!
134 Foregate Street, Chester CH1 1HB (0244 313222)

WACCI is distributed by the Dwerryhouse family in
their spare time. (Thanks to self-seal envelopes)

WACCI: The club for Amstrad CPC computer owners.

FRONT COVER: by Russell Macdonald.

THE TELEPHONE HELP-LINE

BOB MOFFATT, (0994) 453509, Pendine, Carmarthen.
Masterfile III, Mastercalc, Qualitas & Protext.

STEWART PEPPIATT, (0245) 353903, Chelmsford, Basic
M/Code, DMP2000, VDE, Scrivener & general problems

PETER CAMPBELL, (041) 554 4735, Glasgow, OCP Art
Studio, Vidi, Basic, MicroDesign & Art Programs,
ProPrint, CPC plus m/cs and VideoMaster.

FRANK FROST, (0983) 882197, Isle of Wight.
4pm to 10pm, VDE, CP/M and Protext.

IAN NEILL, Work (0926) 416157 9am to 5pm, Warwick
Eprom blowing, Hardware, Electronics and more.

MARK STEWART, (0773) 822599, Belper, 5pm to 9pm,
PAW Adventure Creator, Basic and general help.

LAURENCE SAUNDERS, Herts, (Work) 061 480 4900
Maplins & technical help. Now at Stockport.

NIGEL MELLS, (0784) 250763, Ashford, Tape to disc
problems, Basic programming and a general natter.

MIKE LYONS, (0942) 59942, Wigan, Basic, Stop Press
Dk,tronics Speech Synth, Rodos and general help.

STUART GASCOIGNE, (0272) 831361, Bristol, Basic,
Machine code, PD Discs 19 to 36. * New Tel Number

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

JOHN BOWLEY, (0733) 260616, Peterborough.
Help and advice about the Book Library.

CHRIS GREEN, (0895) 633641, 5pm - 9pm, Middlesex,
MS800, CP/M Protext, PowerPage, Art Studio, NC100
and NC200 notepads, The Plus computers and DTP.

NIGEL CALLCUTT, (0664) 68738, Melton Mowbray.
Technical advice, hardware and CPC repairs.

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

VACANT HELP-LINE PLACES

Two spaces are currently available on the list so
write with your details to WACCI HQ if you feel
you could help your fellow club members.

*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.)*

THANX & STUFF

The ACE Editor

Well it's that time of the month for me to update you all with what's been going on clubwise. So hello and welcome to the Christmas 1994 edition of WACCI. Do you like the christmas cover - errrmm - I did it in October and it didn't feel like christmas at all then. So after that the best I can do is to offer you and yours a very happy Christmas and all the best for the new year.

NIGHT DUTY
My wife works as a midwife in the Countess of Chester Maternity Wing. She has just started a period of night duty and I urge members not to ring outside of the 7 - 9 pm slot if you need to chat to me, otherwise I'll get shot and I wouldn't like that.

CHECK IT OUT
I'm afraid some members are still making out cheques/postal orders to those persons that run the various sections of the club. Please make your cheques etc payable to WACCI.

MAXELL DISCS
I haven't been able to source a supply of Maxell discs so we will continue to buy the Italian discs. John Bowley has secured a supply on 30 days approval. This will allow for the whole batch to be checked before money changes hands. Thanks to John for this.

The Supplement #2 does still contain a reference to Maxell discs. The club no longer has any so please ignore that reference.

CAMPURSOFT NEWS
Peter Campbell tells me that he is expecting to be able to supply an eight socket ROMBOX soon. They will be

uncased but that might change. Please contact Campursoft for more details.

You will also see in AA that Peter is offering a 10% discount in December to AA readers. Good news but the news is even better at WACCI as he offering WACCI members a massive 25% discount for December. Get your orders in double quick - and thanks for looking after club members Peter.

PUBLIC DOMAIN MASTER LIBRARIAN
This job hasn't been filled since Clive stepped down as "Mr WACCI" but now I can announce that John Bowley has (foolishly) volunteered to fill that role. So if you have sent a program to me I'll bang it down to John. If you wish to donate a program to the public domain, or the homegrown library, then sent it to John.

THE MEMBERSHIP LIST
You may recall in issue #82 that Andre Howard wrote to Fair Comment with the idea that members might like to get in touch locally. To achieve this we would need to publish name/area details and that I needed a volunteer for this work.

Bob Miller came forward and is working on the project as I write. If you don't want your name on that list

then write to Bob at the following address or give him a ring.

55 Den Lane, Springhead,
Oldham OL4 4NN
Tel: 061 620 2118

My thanks go to Bob for his help.

WAVE GOODBYE
I have heard from a very good source that WAVE have called the creditors in. It appears that they wish to close the company. I'm so glad that WACCI received all it was due from them recently. Watch out for more details but please don't order from WAVE.

RADICAL SOFTWARE
News has just reached WACCI HQ that Radical have moved their sales department to increase efficiency. Angela Cook will be running it and all orders should be sent to her. Cheques and post orders should be made to Radical Software. Please ring/write for availability and stock list. You can catch Angela on 0903 206739.

AND FINALLY...
I would like to thank all those that are helping me bring you the monthly magazine and run the club. I have really been overwhelmed by members response to my asking for help. Every request has been met, what more could I ask for. I'll not name names for fear of missing somebody out but a big thanks to all, seeya next year *-Paul.*

COMPETITION SPOT

WITH JOHN BOWLEY

Welcome to another super duper mega fantastic (Oh I'm Sorry! I got carried away) competition. What have I got in store for you this month? Read on and find out.

But first a little heart felt message from me to you. It's a special month for me in December. I've been setting your competitions for a year now and I've had loads of support, which I thank you all for. Now on with the show. <<John>>

SEPTEMBERS RESULTS....
I had seven really good stories and I just managed to pick out a winner. The winner is: *Brian Goddard.*

I could not decide on a runner up so all other entrants will receive 2 PD discs of their choice.

Paul is going to print all of the stories in the coming months.

I would like to thank all of those who entered this competition and I will be sending your prizes to you very shortly.

STORY WRITERS....
These are the members who took the time and wrote a story and they are:

Angela Cook, Richard Duggan, John Boon Dennis Francis, Isobel Swade and of course Brian Goddard.

* * * *

MYSTERY WINNER....
In last months Wacci I told you that I was going to pick at random a member from the Wacci database each month and the winner is: *J W S ALLAN.*

If you're reading this please please return the letter I sent you and don't forget to put down your choice of 3 PD Discs. Who will it be next month? <<Wait and see>>

UNRECEIVED PRIZES....
If you have not received your prizes for past competitions I would like to know about it.

I have already sent out all the prizes so hopefully you should have got them by now. <<Oh let it be so!>>

CHRISTMAS OFFER....
Since Christmas is upon us, I will pay half the postal costs during December.

So just have a good look at the new supplement to see what book you want, then send me *HALF* the postal costs.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE....
The results to this compo will be in January owing to the fact its only the 16th November and 11 days to go before it closes and I need to send Paul Decembers competition. <<Sorry>>

COMPETITION SPONSOR....
If you would like to sponsor a compo with a item *(must be in good working order)* that you no longer use, then please get in touch with me. <<Ta>>

SETTING A COMPETITION....
If you would like to set a competition then please feel free to send them to me and when used 2 PD Discs is yours.

DON'T FORGET....
Please put on your entry your choice of 3 PD discs.

Don't forget you can also have our Homegrown software as prizes. Also state what size of discs that you would like either 3.5 or 3". <<Ta>>

SPECIAL THANKS....
I would like to thank Peter Campbell of CampurSoft for being Octobers compo sponsor. <<Thanks once again Peter>>

MY ADDRESS....
John Bowley. 97 Tirrington, Bretton Peterborough, Cambs. PE3 9XT. Tele no. 0733 260816 between 6pm - 8pm. <<Ok>>

COMPETITION SPONSOR....
This months sponsor is: Steve Denson of SD MicroSystems who has given me Picasso. What does Picasso do? I will let Steve tell you himself.

This program is essentially a compromise between several different types of packages. You can store areas of screen memory and then reproduce them with several effects such as rotation, two types of vertex displacements, magnification. Plus you can load in a wide range of fonts.

THIS MONTHS COMPETITION....
To win this excellent program all you have to do is answer the 10 questions and send me your answers to reach me by the 23rd December. <<Have a go>>

1) *What is the highest possible break in snooker?*

2) *Who was the female star in Tiswas?*

3) *In which series did a character called L' Eclair appear?*

4) *What was the name of the MGM lion?*

5) *Who was Andy Pandy's girlfriend?*

6) *Who said "We're more popular than Jesus Christ"?*

7) *How is the year 2000 written in Roman Numerals?*

8) *Who wrote Snow White and the seven dwarfs?*

9) *How many feet in a fathom?*

10) *What does a dipsomaniac crave?*

HAPPY CHRISTMAS....
My family and I would like to wish you all a very very *HAPPY CHRISTMAS.*

Fair Comment

Mike Lyons
85 Leigh Road
Hindley Green
Near Wigan
WN2 4XF

DISCO HERE

Paul, After reading the comments in Stuart Gascoigne's letter regarding what prices members should pay for a 3.5" copy of any library disc, thought it prudent to do an amendment to the facts contained within my previous letter upon this subject.

I now have a PARADOS Rom in my Romboard so this now allows me to supply copies of discs on any format obtainable from within Parados, in addition to the MS800 format and the standard 3" disc Amsdos format. Would suggest any member making an order from my sections, supply me with the following additional details:

1. Have you a Side switch?
2. State format req'd (eg D20, Amsdos)
3. If Large format how many PD Discs req'd on the disc. (Would suggest different User No's for each PD disc copied).

I think your comments upon the pricing structure are acceptable and would consider those members possessing a 3.5" drive would be interested in extending their personal libraries at an economical cost.

As for providing Stuart with the necessary Rom and Romboard, why not as he provides worthwhile support in more ways than one. Go ahead, fix him up with the goods and let's look forward to an increase in PD requests. You are not laying the law down, just 'sowing seeds' to foster (may I say it?) FAIR COMMENT on mildly contentious issues that arise from time to time within any club. Carry on Paul you are operating in a similar manner to Clive who seems to have set a unique standard for others to follow.

Doug Webb
Chorley

<<Hello there again Doug, you seem to becoming as regular as me on these pages and you always seem to be the first letter.
On the question of 3.5 inch PD discs
lets make the costs as per last issue ie: £1.50 for AMSDOS formatted discs utilising one side per disc and £1.00 when utilising both sides of the disc. Of course, the £1.00 price will include either AMSDOS, D20 format and the MS-DOS discs.
I have checked with the Bognorian and he can happily surplus AMSDOS or D20 on 3.5 inch discs. Stuart doesn't have a big disc operating system but that has just changed as I've sent him a Romdos ROM and a (legal) copy of Maxidos. In January I expect to annouce the new service is up and running. I'm afraid you will have to wait a month as not all PD selections will copy onto 3.5 D20 format and our team of PD librarian's will need to test each PD disc and let me know.
Golly gosh, operating in a similar manner to Clive, I hope not! -Paul>>

LABELLED WITH LOVE...

Dear Paul. I have recently acquired Microdesign and Microdesign Plus. Having read both manuals through several times I was looking for a program to practise on and on Side: A I came across DISCLABL.DR.

Having loaded and printed this out at half size I realised that the label was designed to be printed out on a 9-Pin printer.

Now, I have a 24-Pin printer, so I set about reducing the vertical dimensions of the label to 5/6 (180/216) of its original size.

After printing and checking that the size was correct I saved the file to disc and then using MD+ I converted the file to half-size and saved this file as DISCLAB1.DR.

This file was re-loaded into Microdesign Plus and on the LAYOUT page I used BLOCK and KOPY to give six labels on one A4 sheet of paper. This drawing was then saved to disc as DISCLAB2.DR.

Whilst I was customising the label to my own requirements I saw that the "B" was printed upside down so I thought that there must be a way of doing this from within the program. The manual says that when using the WRITE facility the cursor can be made to move in any one of four directions by using CTL and TAB.

With this in mind, I selected the cursor to move from right to left and as soon as I started to type I found that the print was also upside down. Four sizes of print were again available by use of the TAB.

On side: B of the Microdesign disc there is a variety of fonts that can be used in the "Icon Alpha-Mode". These can also be used for the wording but in this case, in ICON, each required letter needs to be turned before use.

In WACCI No 79, Harry Gubby showed how to produce disc labels using TASWORD/QUALITAS and PROTEXT/PROPRINT, and there was also an example of an Advanced Art Studio label.

The Microdesign label is very simple to produce and is easily adapted for 24-Pin and Ink-Jet printers. Just one more method of producing attractive labels. Sincerely,

Ron Boreham
Dyfed

PS I have included the print-out of DISCLAB1.DR and DISCLAB2.DR for you to see just what they look like.

<<Hello Ron and thanks for the letter. It is worth noting that Ron's letter crossed in the post with WACCI 83 thus meaning that Ron hadn't seen LABELLED by Alex Sanderson at the time of writing. The idea behind the letter is the same as the LABELLED article, so it does go to show that great minds think a like (or is that fools seldom differ?) Anyway, alway look before you leap but remember that fortune favours the brave. So that's proved nothing but it's good to talk.
For those members who don't yet have a copy of MicroDesign Plus - get it, you don't know what you are missing. Write to Angie with a wanted ad - you might just find a copy of MD+ -Paul>>

A QUANTUM LOSS

Dear Paul, please find enclosed my subscription form and a cheque for a further six months.

As regards the issue of PD on 3.5" discs, I would prefer the D20 option. I obtained my drive from Siren, on Clive's advice, having waited in vain for one to arrive from Avatar. I didn't lose my money having ordered by Access but, consequently, I am lacking a side switch and, therefore, my second choice would be for the two disc option.

I am a Parados user (this time I did lose £20 to Quantum before obtaining a copy from CampurSoft) but like others I have not received any documentation. I would be interested if any other user could tell me if it is possible for Parados to read both sides of a 3.5" disc which has been formatted to the standard double sided 180K per side, without a side switch. If this is the case then I would also be able to use the one disc standard format option. Yours sincerely,

Martin Cush
Bristol

<<Hello there Martin, thanks for the subscription and your vote on the 3.5" PD disc option.

I'm sorry to hear you lost twenty notes to Quantum - what a bunch of crooks they turned out to be.

Now here is another Parados user that has no instructions and dear old CampurSoft are the supplier. Peter Campbell did assure me that he sends a letter with each Parados ROM asking you to send a disc in order to recieve the documentation file. Did you get such a letter Martin?

As far as my understanding of Parados goes - yes it can read both sides without a side switch but I can't test it out as I don't have this ROM in my box. Can somebody confirm this for Martin, thanks. -Paul>>

FRANK ADMISSION

Dear Angie, May I please use your column to kill several birds with one stone?

I'd like to congratulate Paul for stepping so swiftly and capably into Uncle C's shoes and wish him and the editorial team much success in keeping the spirit of WACCI alive. In similar vein I must thank you for taking over

the FC section (and wish Mike Lyons a speedy recovery).

Anything I have to say about Uncle C would be but a feeble echo of the praise which is due to him. Put him in the free WACCIs for life membership - I'd be happy to pay a little extra to support the idea.

I have enjoyed 'The Index Story' by Frank Neatherway. Frank has obviously put a lot of hard work into this project and I look forward to seeing the fruit of his labour. Are we going to be able to buy back copies of early WACCIs - which I presume he has indexed? There are difficulties I admit. It probably wouldn't be cost effective to photocopy back issues and the mix of tape, 3" and 3.5" disc users might make it difficult to find a medium which meets the needs of the majority of members. Can anything be done? Perhaps Richard Burton's annual surveys of members equipment might indicate a way ahead.

While on the Subject of the Index I have a question for Frank about his article in issue 82. I couldn't understand why he chose to add data name 'X'. It sounds like a lot of hard work which adds no information to the database. I would have been tempted to select all subject start letters A-E, purge unselected records, save the result and then convert to ASCII. The process could then be repeated for subject start letters F-O and P-Z. Have I missed a trick somewhere Frank?

Did I read Doug Webb's letter in FC #82 correctly? MicroDesign+ on a 3.5" disc. How is it done? My copy of Micro-Design has resisted all attempts to back up on a 3" disc. I still use the orginal, which scares me each time I use it and I would love to create a working copy in either 3" or 3.5" format. Perhaps Doug could tell us how to do this.

A small good services rosette. I have found that System Insight, Unit 1-3 East Burrowfield, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL7 4TB are a nice firm to do business with for postal supplies for bubble jet printers.

Finally a WANTED notice. Can anyone sell me ZORK I and ZORK II - complete with the usual Infocom bits and bobs? One for Angie's Card Index? Yours,

Bob Moffatt
Pendine

<<Hi Bob, I'm sorry your letter didn't go in last months mag but I plain ran out of room. Thanks for your good wishes and you are so right about the editorial team, without the help of all those that contribute to the magazine and the club in general, where would I be - loss in a daze hopelessly wandering around North Wales looking for inspiration. Talking of inspiration what are you doing these days George, long time no hear.

I hope you enjoyed the Index by Frank and you are quite correct about the issues it raises. Still, at least we now have an index that has raised these issues.

I'm afraid members will be puzzled by your reference to the data label "X" in the Index. This was present in early versions (you will remember that Bob helped Frank exporting the data out of Masterfile and he must have seen it then) but it was replaced by LETTER (in the article column) in the final version.

MD+ does copy onto a 3 or 3.5 disc but you need the right software and the knowledge of how to do it. My working copy was made using Discology and chosing 0 to 40 tracks instead of 0 to 39 from options menu.

Thanks for the note about System Insight. I use Novatech of Portsmouth (0705 664144) for purchasing club printers. They get my good services rosette for excellent service.

Angie, could you please record the desire of Bob to obtain these ZORK machines together with their respective bits and bobs. -Paul>>

DEEPLY DIPPY

Dear Paul, Could I ask a favour? I have obtained an Epson printer model MX-80111F/T and I am unable to find a manual for it. I have been told that the dip switches have been altered! I have found the dip switch settings for Epson MX100, FX85 and FX105 but when set all I get is gobbildygook printed. Frustrating to say the least.

Is there anyone that I can contact that may be able to help? Many thanks Paul in anticipation. Regards,

Ernie Ruddick
Cleveland

<<Hi Ernie, well what a pickle to be in but have you asked Epson. They may be your best bet if a member can't

throw any light on the subject. Let's see what reaction you - anybody know about this Epson printer? -Paul>>

MARK THIS...
Dear Paul, as I have not put pen to paper for a while, I thought that it was about time that I did and put in my twopeneth about a few things currently being debated about in Fair Comments pages.

First of all, I would like to start with the issue of supplying the PD software on 3.5 discs. I think that every PD librarian who has got a 3.5" disc drive should supply the software on 3.5" discs if a member requests it. This would therefore save the 3" discs for those, who like myself have not got a 3.5" disc drive. It would then bring the cost of the PD software down in price. I think that the price of £1.50 is about right. I also agree with you that Stuart Gascoigne should be supplied with a rombox so that he can do this.

Now to the convention. I have certainly not given up hope of the club holding a convention. If the UAUG can do it, then so can we! It's a shame that not many members replied to the origonal request from Clive. I was one of the few that did and I was very disapointed to hear that hardly no one else had bothered to reply. I have not got a car, but that would not of stopped me from comming up there!! I would have found a way of doing it even if I had to pay a fortune to BR to get there by train. Keep up the good work. Regards,

Mark Johnson
Essex

<<Hello Mark, thanks for taking the time to write in as I know you are a busy person.

Thanks also for agreeing with me over PD discs etc., you certainly will go a long way in my estimation if you do that.

With regard to the convention, I'm still waiting for members to come leaping out of the woodwork to volunteer for the much needed (and not sort after) convention positions. Oh well, one can but hope. -Paul>>

CROSS STITCHED AND DRIVE YOU CRAZY....
Dear Members, I would be very grateful if any of you would do me a idiots guide to changing the disc drive on a 6128. As I have a new one which I want to use in my machine but I'm not sure how to go about it.

Also for your information there was quite a lot of interest some time ago in Cross Stitch, I remember Ian Whaley saying his wife Carol was interested, also George Ho-Yow mentioned it in a letter. If you're interested in buying a Cross Stitch Designer for the CPC 6128 then Jacqui Owen Wolverhampton has recently purchased one from: H.T.B. Computers Ltd, Broadwater House, Broadwater Road, Romsey, Hants. SO15 8GT. Tel: 0784 516279. The cost is £29.95. I will try and persuade her to do a review!!!

Angie
Bloxwich

<<Dear Angie, thanks for your little plea for help on replacing a disc drive. This is what WACCI should be all about AND IT IS. Good old Wally Collinson from Gloucester has sent me an article on fitting new rubber bands to disc drives and you need to take the drive out to do it.

As Wally sent his article in on paper so I've sent it to Angie to type up. She can also have a go at replacing her disc drive unit. We wait with bated breath.

Thanks for the news on Cross Stitch, gosh what a little old first WACCI would have if it reviewed such a program. We wait once more, with bated breath of course, of news. -Paul>>

A STICKY RUBBER BAND MAN
Dear Angie, somehow in the recent ke-fuffle of changing Editors, Mike's ongoing ill-health and all, the following letter which I sent off some months ago seems to have got lost so I've added a bit and re-submitted it in the hopes that someone can see where I'm going wrong.

First though, get well soon Mike, there's not many of us about! And salutations to Clive, hoping his brain has gone off the boil and got back to normal after all the years of his much appreciated editorship.

Seems about time I added a few more lines to the ongoing saga of DOSCOPY.

First, I have to say many thanks to John Bowley who took pity on me and sent me a copy of Herr Facehugger's fractured English Instructions and there hidden amongst the verbiage was the cryptic rune. "Your drive is also single sided if you have bad(sic) installed side switch----!" I, in my ignorance had assumed that a single sided disc was a commodity for some other type of drive!

So, we got over that hurdle and managed to format a disc, and wonder of wonders, managed to transfer a variety of files to it. Then, full of the joys of spring, I sent it off to my son in the wilds of Wales, who runs a PC with MS-DOS and WINDOWS and other goodies and waited for shouts of joy.

No such luck. His machine condescended to recognise the disc as being the correct format, but steadfastly refused to accept that there was any files on the disc.

My Son then copied a couple of test files onto the disc and sent it back. Would you believe, I had no bother in conveting them into AMSDOS and loading them into PROTEXT! So, I then converted a couple of Protext files and sent them back but to no avail, his machine says there are no files on the disc only the ones that he had put there in the first place!

Well there you are. I really don't know what's wrong. It would seem that the file headers are not being transferred somehow so I would guess that I'm misreading an instruction somewhere, or else my son's outfit is non standard MS-DOS which is pretty unlikely.

Trouble is, he's a busy little bee so it takes an age to get a reply back, by which time I've forgotton the question! And now much later.

Having had a lot of correspondence with Paul in the last few months as an editorial dogsbody, it slowly penetrated the foggy depths of my elderly brain that I am a congenital and dedicated left hander and as such have always designated the discs in my 3.5 drive B as switch to the LEFT for side A(1) and RIGHT for side B(2), my side switch being actually at the back of the drive. Whereas all the discs I received were the other way round.

So, am I right in assuming that the directory for the files that I recorded was in fact on the wrong side of the disc and would therefore be ignored by the PC? I have yet to try out this "new" theory, as Paul has kept me busy and my ancient motor

transport has decided to come apart at the seams quite literally. (Hint: buy shares in glass fibre and resin makers). Also I was suffering from the current problem of belt slip in my 3" drive. Elastic bands proving to be less than helpful, in desperation I raided my workshop for a substance called belt dressing and VERY CAREFULLY put a tiny drop on the belt. Eureka! works a treat (so far). Seems the little brass pulley on the motor gets very shiny over the years and slips round without getting a grip on the belt and the dressing which is a sort of tarry substance makes the surface slightly sticky. Well, it worked for me.

Ron Izett
Maidstone

PS: Following on from the above "theory" does this mean that you can only access the A side of a converted disc when you use DOSCOPY on a 3.5 drive with a side switch??

<<Aye-up Ron, it's good to hear from you but I must say it's not only letters we lose but marbles as well.

As for Clive's brains going off the boil, I think they must be pretty cold by now.

I tend to agree with you Ron over the position of the side switch. It matters not that you call side A(1) B(2) and B(2) A(1) to an AMSDOS disc. If it isn't on that side then flip the switch. It matters to a D20 disc. I format all my D20 discs with the side switch set to A(1). If I flip the switch to B(2) then all I get is a Drive B: read fail. So it must be with MS-DOS 720K formatted discs.

The other thing which makes me feel that your theory is true is that I use DOSCOPY an awful lot and it sure works both ways for me. A thought: perhaps Simon Cobb of Siren could start doing a range of left-handed 3.5 inch disc drives - well maybe not.

Belt dressing! Blooming Henry - I've loads of surplus tins of that stuff and didn't know what to do with it. As I write belts are soaking away in baths full of tarry substances -Paul>>

CHAPTER AND VERSE...
Dear angie, I think what Peter Curgenven wants from Parados for CP/M is impractical, if not impossible.

Though the Amstrad DOS and CP/M both access the disc ROM, CP/M has its own disc access routines.

CP/M has a Disc Parameter Block which holds the values for each drive; in CP/M Plus, this is held in banked RAM and RAMDOS simply changes these values. With CP/M Plus, Locomotive added an Extended Disc Parameter Block which holds further information including the first sector number. This is different for each format. So all PARADOS has to do is read the first sector number of a disc to determine its format.

One could reproduce this in CP/M Plus by adding an RSX to intercept all disc access calls, check the first sector number and change the Disc Parameter Block if necessary.

But, unlike Amstrad programs, many CP/M programs rely on overlays which are read into RAM from disc when required; this frees space in RAM to hold data. Some also manage long data files by reading in from and saving portions to disc. The overhead of checking every disc access under CP/M would probably slow programs down unacceptably, particularly as we only have floppy discs on the CPC.

But CP/M 2.2 cannot have RSXs (there isn't enough RAM). So, whatever version of CP/M you have, the most you can realistically do to speed things up is to modify your copy of CP/M to read one big format automatically and, because CP/M uses different disc access routines from AMSDOS, you always have to use ¦CPM or its equivalent before anything to do with a COM file. Yours sincerely,

John R Hudson
Huddersfield

<<Hello John and a big thankyou for coming to my rescue over CP/M. Your explanation has cleared up in my mind as to why I need a patched EMS file for every type of large format disc when using ROMDOS.

What we need to know now is this type of patched EMS file available for Parados. If not then ROMDOS has great advantage to regular CP/M users.

This question over Parados and CP/M needs answering. I have scanned the Parados documentation file and it is a CP/M free document. All it tells you is that DR LOGO won't run with the Parados ROM. I suspect that Parados is

AMSDOS friendly only. There seems little point writing to Quantum, STS or whoever they are for an answer. I'd probably get more response from Ultra Software. Can that extremely helpful Peter Campbell up there in Scotland throw any light on the matter, after all CampurSoft do sell it. How about it Pete, any ideas for us. -Paul>>

AA WHAT'S UP HERE
Dear WACCI, I am writing in reply to Patrick Hanlan's letter in the November issue of WACCI.

I am sorry if Patrick feels that Amstrad Action is aimed at 14 year old games players obsessed with Hitchiker and Red Dwarf (What's wrong with being obsessed with Red Dwarf, it is a very funny programme), but as I am sure you will appreciate, it is very difficult to produce a magazine which everybody will enjoy.

The beauty of the fanzine is that it can survive aimed at a smaller target audience, a commercial magazine (especially the only one left) cannot do that.

I know it is hard to keep forking out £3.00 per month for what is essentially 20 odd pages of enthusiasts rambling on.

It must be said, that AA does try it's best to please everybody and with a dying market and a dying machine, it is difficult. Perhaps if everybody drew together a bit more and supported what was trying to be done, instead of knocking it, we might get somewhere. *<<Well said Angela. -Angie>>*

I am pleased to hear that Patrick took out a years subscription, this way we know what we are playing with and can try to elevate the magazine. I urge anybody out there who does read Amstrad Action to take out a subscription. It does not only save you time, money and effort, but it also lets us know what we can count on and know that people out there do still want a magazine, rather than us wasting our time and effort.

Please do not think I am sounding off just because I work for Amstrad Action, or that I am defending it as being perfect. There are a lot of things wrong with it, but we are only human.

I am passionate about the CPC and I do not want to alienate it or any body else. Like most of AA's other writers,

I am heavily involved with other aspects of the CPC scene and would hate to see it go just because a few people could not support a magazine.

If people do feel that Amstrad Action is lacking in something (like the amount of pages) then please write to us at Future Publishing and voice your grievances. If we know what we are doing wrong, we can try to put it right.

I hope that serious users of the CPC will be pleased in the following months with more serious reviews, a serious hardware series and possibly more features coming for the non-games player.

Good Luck Paul in your new job as Editor. WACCI is already a fine magazine and it can now only get better. Yours Sincerely,

Angela Cook
West or East? Sussex

<<Dear Angela, taeverso for your views on Amstrad Action. It must be a very difficult time at present for the AA team at Future Publishing. A lot of chopping and changing on the staff front going on as well as some rather odd management decisions. The picture hasn't been all that clear to AA readers and subscribers have suffered most. First subscriptions ended, then they started again with a disc/tape option and the last news we have is cover tape only subscriptions.

The confusion with Ablex hasn't helped and to cap it all the last issue was only 24 pages long.

AA has, in my opinion, always targeted its readerships needs. Patrick doesn't fit that mould, as don't most WACCI members. I do feel that Patrick's statement holds true about 14 year olds and games. Let's not split hairs about whether Red Dwarf is funny or not, AA can do it's own thing, as can WACCI.

There is no conflict and I certainly don't want to open up another bag of worms. AA is fine by me, I wish it continues forever, I hope it grows a little fatter, I hope it continues to target it's readership and, most of all, I wish it and its contributors every success as I know the hard work that goes into magazine production.

What I dislike about AA (and Angela has fallen in the same trap) is that they call WACCI a fanzine. WACCI is a

club that produces a MAGAZINE. The only section of the CPC market that WACCI doesn't target is games. Anything else is within our remit. Computing, without the games scene, still covers an enormous area, please don't put us down so Angela. -Paul>>

A LAZY CAT

Dear Angie, Nearly two years ago, in Issue No 58, Mike published my letter about printing of hard copies of the CAT of the files on a large capacity disc. He was good enough to say that the program I submitted worked well but that he thought that it should be enhanced to cover all user areas.

At the time, for a variety of reasons - chiefly laziness - I felt no urge to explore as Mike had suggested but recently I have been playing around with MICRODESIGN PLUS, which has a menu facility for changing user areas up to a maximum of 10; there is also a window for listing the IC files to be loaded, but this is limited to 25 files, whereas I have over 40 files on my 800k disc. The obvious way out was to split the disc into user areas of 25 files each; this jogged my memory to Mike's remarks and I thought I'd have a go.

In actual fact, it turned out to be easier than I had expected and a revised copy of the program follows this letter, under the title of HARDCATZ. I have not seen the original program in the PD Index, possibly because of copyright difficulties, but I'll leave it to you to deal with as you think fit. With kind regards,

Vic Baldwin
Broadstairs

<<Hi there Vic, Angie sent your disc to me for action. Infact I got two discs and I hope they are safely back with you now.

The all new HARDCATZ is a super little program to keep track of your disc collection, no matter what size of discs you use. It is so simple to use that the user can't go wrong. You do, of course, need a printer.

As all the necessary credits have been given to the writers of the various sections of the code, then I see no reason why it should not grace a WACCI PD disc. Cheers Vic. Hopefully there will be news on the new PD front very soon. -Paul>>

JUSTIFY ME

Dear WACCI, the continuing Saga of me verses the MO11. Isn't it nice when it comes to pass that someone some where has most of the answers and takes the trouble to type them out for our (WACCI Members) benefit. Unfortunately I still have the problem of the varying margins. Today it rained so with John Hudson's suggestions still fresh in the memory banks a test run was called for.

Using only the default setting's in the MO11 program I typed in five pages of text. The only printer commands are on the top line all by themselves. As they were on the last three hundred pages.

The paper is A4 and can only be put through the printer in exactly the same place as the page before it. I have fixed gates and channels to the paper run to make it impossible to feed it through any other way.

At the time is seemed reasonable to assume that the printer would lay the first character down in exactly the same place every time. It is always wrong to assume.

The first page has from the left hand edge of the paper a margin of three characters. The second, third, fourth is six character's in. The fifth is four characters in. So I have given up and decided to live with it for the time being.

All and sundry keep wittering on about Protext. From what I have heard and read it could be a good idea. But, the main problem is that MO11 is so user friendly. Shifting text in mass or lines has never been simpler. It is better than Kind Words on the Amiga or more versatile I should say. It also has a blank screen with the cursor at the top left with no surrounding Icons or rulers.The all singing all dancing NEW MO11 complete with bells and whistles is like using the CBM plus 4. I mean is that progress.

The only bitch I have is it limits me to 15K of text or five pages of A4, varying margins and a tendency to drag text from the above line with the word wrap and no line count.

The screen is in living colour. Who needs white paper and black text. One other handy tool is the comms proggie. It will lift Asckie off any disc and show on screen. Then it asks you nicely if you want a hard copy or a

save copy of both. If Protext is as easy to use as MO11 circa 1986 with the pointy carat I'll go for it. Regards to all,

Tom Gordon
Lancashire

<<Dear Tom, may your margins always be ragged, your text justified and your beloved MOII your companion for life.

On the other hand ditch this love and accept the next copy of Protext that lands on WACCI's doormat. Infact I won't even ask if you want it - you are going to get it mate. I can't wait to see what kind of letter we get from you then. -Paul>>

OH NO - ANOTHER RUBBER BAND MAN
Dear WACCI, I was reading Issue 83 and was very interested to read about the disc drive belts. I have so far done three of these belts in three different drives and there are at least two different sizes. I think that there are three sizes, but one of the belts is one that I did a couple of years ago and I can not remember the size although I think is was about 85mm. The other two were 66mm and 68mm, these sound very similar, however the 66mm belt was a flat belt and the 68mm and 85mm belts were both 1mm square belts, which for some odd reason seem to be much smaller (although not half the size or anything sensible like that)) than the flat belts for the same description. The drive with the 66mm belt was the oldest and the 85mm was the newest, they are, I believe, made by different manufacturers. I have found that the square belts are not as good as the flat belts, but they are significantly better than an old belt and only seem to cost about 70 or 80 pence from an electronics shop, the flat belts are about £ 1.75. Yours Sincerely,

Nic Rayner
Manchester

<<Hi Nic, just when I thought the rubber band saga was over you pop up with more sizes and types of belt.

The only thing I can say at this point is you will need to open your drive up (not now) and determine exactly what little rascal you own. Perhaps we should include it in the next WACCI survey but not yet. I'm not sure we have heard the last. -Paul>>

SOUND ADVICE!
Dear WACCI, A suggestion to Isobel regarding printer Ribbons. At your local Tandy shop you will find a pack of video head cleaners. They are man made chamoise on a plastic stick and as they are the same plastic as glasses legs they shape easily with boiling water. At the right hand end of the ribbon run there is a space where the leather end can be inserted under the ribbon. Bend the stick in to a Z shape until it sits on the paper bed and under the ribbon. Heat and bend the leather end until it lifts the tape about a quarter of an inch (5mm). Then stick the other end down to the printer bed with Super glue or a small self tapping screw of an absolute minimum length to penetrate the deck of the printer. This takes the slack out of the ribbon as the manufacturers are a bit iffy on length. Now drive a couple of pages through the printer to check if the pad is in any way fouling the head and adjust if necessary. It should be slightly above it as it comes to the end of the print line.

Now toddle of to your local stationary shop and buy a bottle of endorsing ink. Insert an empty refill from a biro pen and stick it through the safety plastic cover of the bottle. Heat the end with a flame and seal a needle in to the end. When it is cool take out the needle and spot the pad with ink on either side of the printer ribbon. You now have a re inked ribbon that will type crisp black on every page. The ribbon I have in use at the moment is three nearly four reams of paper old and every page is a little love. With varying margins of course.

The only problem's are that you can easily over ink and if the printer is left for a week without use the little rollers inside the case tend to stick. With the printer switched OFF spot the pad and move the head manually until the ribbon runs free. You are now back in business. Should you happen to drop a splodge of ink on the printer a quick wipe off with a WET WIPE will remove same. It is also very good on other bits of plastic what gets mucky. Like the keyboard. Regards to all yet again,

Tom Gordon
Lancashire

PS I see our Editor went for the soft option on the label remover idea. Didn't like the cold steel option. Well different strokes for different blokes. Glad we are not all the same.

<<Hello again Tom, I wonder how Isobel is feeling at this point. What you describe can't be for the faint hearted. Have you really done this?

Many moons ago in the pages of WACCI the subject of endorsing ink was discussed. (Hint - use the Index, it really does work.) It got a thumbs down because it clogs up print heads. The reason being that the ink used in the ribbons has lubricating properties whereas endorsing doesn't.

How long have you been doing this for Tom? Do you add a little WD40? If the rollers tend to stick then don't you think your precious nine pins just do as well?

Well dear readers, what are we to make of this? Fact, fiction, good or bad. Answers on a postcard please to Angie to arrive no later than 12 noon on Monday, 12 December 1994.

Soft options eh! I reserve the cold steel option for removing old labels from Magtron or italian discs. It greatly improves their chances of actually allowing the user to format them ready for the bin. -Paul>>

FAREWELL OLD FRIEND
Dear Paul, alas, the time has come to say farewell. Having been a WACCI member for nearly two and a half years, it is with sadness that I am leaving the world of the CPC. Like so many others before me, I have been drawn slowly but surely into the world of the PC.

For those who have yet to experience a PC, it is a simple, greedy beast. It sits in a corner of your room, and causes a dip in the National Grid when you turn it on. It is very expensive, and programs have a tendency to take up 50 Megabytes on your hard disc - that's around 140 3" discs. Software prices would bring tears to your eyes, and the PC you buy will become obsolete shortly after you open the box and get rid of all the little bits of polystyrene. Oh, how I long for the good old days.

To top off all this, I'm now in the placement year of my computer degree, and I can't even be bothered looking

at the @$^!!# thing when I get home from a day's work.

Rather than let my CPC equipment gather dust, I have decided to sell the lot. I would be grateful if you could place the attached ad in WACCI sometime.

And now the thank-yous. Thanks to Amstrad Action, back in the old days when Rod Lawton was editor. Thanks to WACCI - the late <<??? -Paul>> Uncle Clive for running it so well, Mike Lyons for reading and printing my occasional rantings, and to you, Paul, for relieving me of my money at regular intervals and taking over the WACCI throne from Clive. I hope you can keep it going for many years to come. Not forgetting everyone who has written articles, run the PD libraries etc. Give yourselves a great big pat on the back.

A special mention is due for Peter Campbell and Jess Harpur (of Campursoft fame) - I'd hate to see Peter's phone bill. Without these two gentlemen I would have undoubtedly been worse off, and DES would never have appeared. Don't worry chaps, I'm not going anywhere. I'll be in touch when Campursoft Office v1.0 for Windows is finished. It'll only take about thirty years...

So this is the end... no tears please... Best wishes,

Michael Beckett
Antrim

<<Dear Michael, thanks very much for the letter and for letting WACCI know that you are leaving us. Members are always dropping off the mailing list and I often think what has happen to them. So it's nice to know.

I can fully understand why Michael is moving on and dropping a C. The CPC is certainly an excellent learning machine, so many have benefited from it and look back at it with love.

The CPC helped me considerably at work. No, we use PC's and Digital Vax workstations not CPC's, but as no one else knew anything about computers when we first moved into the computer age I became the IT bod. In the land of the blind the one-eyed man is king.

So farewell Michael, live long and prosper. You have left your mark on the CPC scene with programs like Epic and DES and, therefore, you will not be forgotten. Tara. -Paul>>

MARKET STALL

VERY BASIC BASIC

Written by Alan Tilling
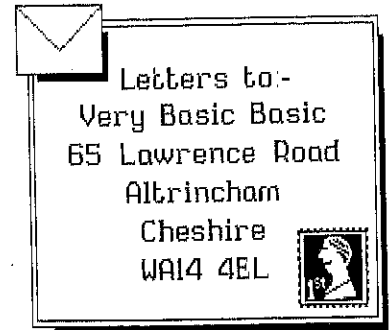
Hello everyone, 'tis I. The program this month has not got any definite use but, as you will see, is about how to isolate a word (or character sequence) from within a sentence.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS...

Believe it or not there is an ultimate goal to this line of thinking but for the moment I'm not going to let on what the final program is going to be. For that matter, I'm not saying when I'm going to get around to finishing it off in a form that can be used.

Right, now I've got everyone guessing, <<including me -Paul>> let's move on to this month's piece.

AND THE PURPOSE IS...

All this piece of code does is to take a saying, find the collective noun, remove it and then repeat the saying in a garbled form. The completed program is called "sayings4" so to find the correct listing look in line 2 of each of the following listings. Lines 1, 2, 3 and 1000 are my usual introductory lines. The next three give the title of the program followed by four lines of the screen set up. Line 100 is n=INT(RND*q). RaNDom sets up a number in the variable n set by the value of the seed (assuming the seed is positive). This number is zero to one so to make it into the value(s) required, it is multiplied by a further number (4 in this case). To get to as near as random number as possible, a random seed is needed. This is provided by RANDOMIZing the TIME elapsed since the computer was last switched on or reset in line 80.

DATA

The sayings are contained in data statements to be found after the end of the program, lines 360,370 and 380. Only one can be used at a time and so

to get at the one it is READ into the string variable called saying$. If the random element wasn't there them "A pride of lions" would always be selected for no better reason than it is first in the list. The random part causes the value n to be 0, 1, 2 or 3 and this value is used to move the data pointer to, or to RESTORE the pointer to the chosen line number as in lines 110 to 140.

THE CLEVER BIT

The actual word partitioning program starts at 180 which is a loop which measures the LENgth of saying$ and terminates when it gets to the end. Remember, saying$ is not necessarily a fixed length. Start is set to 1 in line 170 and the MID$ of 190 causes the 1 character, (first time around) 1 in from the start of the string to be dumped into the string variable letter$. Second time round it causes this character to be overwritten with the 1 character, 2 in from the start and so on. Line 200 takes word$ as yet empty and adds letter$ to it and builds up a word or rather a part of a sentence.

In written and indeed spoken english each word is denoted by the presence of a space before and aft and so 210 tests for these spaces. When one is found it looks at flag to see whether it is the first or second occurrence. If it is the first space, flag will be 0 as set by line 160 and so line 220 makes flag equal to 1. 230 increases start by 1 (for use in 190) and 230 sends Basic back to 180 until s equals the LENgth of saying$. Eventually a

space will be found when flag=1 ie a word has been isolated. At this point the loop needs to be exited and so line 210 makes s equal to the length of saying$. Note that a goto 250 is not used. The correct way to come out of a loop is by making the control variable do its stuff and wind the loop up as if it had gone the full number of rounds.

ITS ONLY WORDS

Because this is only a vary small program, we are able to look ahead and anticipate what is in word$ and it will be "A word". Word is in place of, in our case, the collective noun which if you count the letters is not always the same length. To get rid of the A<space>, 250 makes use of MID$ again to start at the 3rd character of word$ and carry on until it gathers all of the letters, sorry characters less 3. The resultant is dumped into word$, overwriting its original contents. That combined with 330 is about it really but to give a little interest I have added a further random piece.

INTEREST

Word$ has now been fixed and isolated and is held in line 250. Variable n was fixed earlier in the program and so it is now used in 260 to 290 to pick saying string again. Notice, however this time the "n numbers" are incorrect and so saying$ now is not appropriate to word$. Just to make things clearer for the future, this second saying$ is now called barmy$. How's that for meaningful variable names? For simplicity I cheated with 310 and counted up the length of the "word" and fitted in six spaces. To get the last word, the RIGHT hand most

THE PROGLET by ALAN

```
1 GOTO 3
2 SAVE"sayings",a:STOP
3 ON BREAK GOSUB 1000
10 REM ==================
20 REM sayings for WACCI December 1994
30 REM ==================
40 MODE 1
50 INK 0,0
60 INK 1,18
70 BORDER 0
80 RANDOMIZE TIME
90 q=4:REM q=quantity of sayings
100 n=INT(RND*q)
110 IF n=0 THEN RESTORE 360
120 IF n=1 THEN RESTORE 370
130 IF n=2 THEN RESTORE 380
140 IF n=3 THEN RESTORE 390
150 READ saying$
160 flag=0
170 start=1
180 FOR s=1 TO LEN(saying$)
190   letter$=MID$(saying$,start,1)
200   word$=word$+letter$
210   IF letter$=" " AND flag=1
      THEN s=LEN(saying$)
220   IF letter$=" " THEN flag=1
230   start=start+1
240 NEXT s
250 word$=MID$(word$,3,LEN(word$)-3)
260 IF n=1 THEN RESTORE 360
270 IF n=2 THEN RESTORE 370
280 IF n=3 THEN RESTORE 380
290 IF n=0 THEN RESTORE 390
300 READ barmy$
310 PRINT "A        of "RIGHT$
      (barmy$,6)
320 LOCATE 3,1
330 PRINT word$
340 END
350 REM ===== data statements =====
360 DATA A pride of lions
370 DATA A gaggle of geese
380 DATA A forest of trees
390 DATA A string of onions
1000 MODE 2:INK 0,13:INK 1,0:BORDER 13
      :LIST
```

six characters of barmy$ are selected and printed with "A<6xspaces> of". The locate at 310 causes word$ to be written by 330 over the top of the spaces. Thus a daft saying appears.

Well that's all for this month as it is, indeed, for this year. Have a merry Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year.
Till next month
Bye for now .... *Alan*

ALAN'S CHRISTMAS QUIZ

Here is a quiz for 1994. Some of the questions are the same as last year's but most of them are new. *ALL* of them have sensible answers but the answers are not always obvious. It should be possible to answer all the questions in two minutes. Have fun.

1 Write your name in the square provided

2 How many animals of each species did Moses take aboard the Ark?

3 Divide 30 by half and add ten

4 If you were alone in a deserted house at night and there was a lamp, a fire, a candle and you only had one match, which would you light first?

5 Take two apples from three and what do you have?

6 If you drove a bus leaving Rhyl with 40 passengers and dropped off 7 at Prestatyn, stopped at Flint and picked up 10, went on to Saltney, dropped 8 there and picked up 5 and then drove on to arrive in Chester 2 hours later. What was the driver's name?

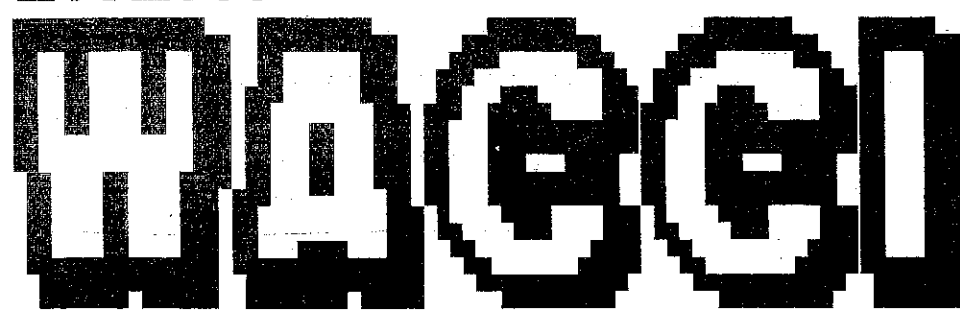7 A man built a rectangular house each side facing south. From the window he saw a bear. What colour was it?

8 If a doctor gave you three tablets and told you to take one every half hour, how long would they last you?

9 Which country has the 4th of July, Britain or America?

10 Some months have 31 days, some have 30 days but how many have 28 days?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 17

PLAYING WITH PROTEXT by Peter Ceresole

This is the last in the series of "Playing with Protext" it's a shame as most people seem to enjoy reading about it and playing with the powers which it has to offer. This is true: it's certainly more fun than Chess or Arknoids.

PREAMBLE

Seeing the letters and queries in Fair Comment about PWP and with the Editor's encouragement ringing in my ears ("When's the next one, then?"), I thought I'd have a go at describing the mildly non-standard things about my particular set-up and have a bash at primary printer driving. The simplest place to start seems to be the loader, which is in Basic (what?)

```
10 REM STARTING AT THE END (OR)
29 REM HISTORY IS BUNK
```

(Okay Joolz, I know he didn't say is the First World War. London, 1988.) I have a problem with Protext, so I call Arnor and they say "Why don't you join WACCI, somebody there is bound to know." I think that joining WACCI was definitely nicer than the first world war. Ultimately, it even solved my little problem.

```
30 REM LINES 1000 to 1180
```

TWO DRIVES ARE BETTER THAN ONE

I have a CPC with two drives and Protext hanging off the back with Promerge, Prospell and Utopia. I normally keep my Protext loader disc in A. It redefines the function keys (and some others), has a lot of useful formats on it for various letters, scripts and things like that, plus different box drawing programs and on the other side there's the Dictionary. So I keep all my text in the B drive. I wanted to fire up (run"disc) from drive A and have protext log onto drive B if there was a disc in there, otherwise not. I wanted to do this automatically. A year ago, I thought I'd try to do something about it.

```
40 ON ERROR GOTO 50
50 WACCI HQ
```

HOLDING UP THE FLOW

So I put ¦B into the loader program and "on error goto" a line that said ¦A. This didn't work. "On error goto" doesn't catch the "Disc missing" error. "Retry Ignore or Cancel?" kept on holding up the smooth flow of action. After three years of using Protext, it was a dodge I really wanted to get going. So I joined WACCI and the STEVOID printed my plaintive letter. In his ¬reply, he also pointed out that all it took was B (RETURN) to log onto the drive but this was UNHELPFUL because although he was right it wasn't FUN The problem with Steve is that, although he'd deny it, deep down he probably thinks that humans behave rationally. Wrong. Believe me.

MORE PINS THE BETTER

You could have heard 24 pins drop but all the pins stayed firmly up. Not a whisper. I tried in ACU too (sob.) I was enjoying WACCI but no solution came out of the [author??????], or out of the membership either.

HELP ON THE LINE

Then Steve published the WACCI helpline numbers and I called Stewart Peppiatt. This was definitely a good move, because Stewart fixed it for me. It so happened that in this case (after a false start) he had the solution in his back pocket. Within a couple of days he'd sent a bespoke type-in and like all the best ones, it worked first pop. If there is a disc in drive B the routine returns 1 to &bf32. If the drive is empty, it traps the error message and returns 0. That accounts for line 1180 in the loader: if PEEK(&bf32) is 1 then it is true and the machine logs onto B. Otherwise it stays logged onto A. I can't over-emphasise the pleasure that this small and silly fix gives me every time I fire up. It's just that little less flaffing about and it's really lovely.

```
60 REM LINES 1 to 8
```

Stewart's other contribution to my serenity is at the top of the program.

```
                    Stuff like this.
```

```
Useless,
  but very, very nice.
```

PLAYING WITH PROTEXT by Peter Ceresole

TOP PROGRAM

Lines 1 to 6 are the set-up program for the KDS Mk 2 8-bit printer interface. The KDS port is a wonderful thing. It gives you Access to all those IBM characters on a Printer.

PROBLEMS WITH INTERFACING

Now I started with Mk 1 KDS interface. It let me reach the parts of the Juki daisy wheel that the CPC can't reach.

The problem with the Mk 1 port is that unless you fire it up, it corrupts the printer output. There are programs that won't run with it, like Advanced Art Studio. So to print from that I have to take the interface off. Of course, I forget each time. It's a real bore. Save the Rembrandt. Power down. Take the ruddy thing off. Power up. Once more through the lenslok (a special treat this one.) And after the session, bung the interface back on. A real drag. Most especially, the KDS interface won't normally run with Promerge Plus. Arnor rewrote the loader for me, in a few hours, dictated down the phone and it worked perfectly. Now along comes the MK 2. Deeply, deeply wonderful. It's invisible to the printer unless it's set up and it's tiny on the CPC. Does all it should do, even has a callable patch on the Graduate ROM version of CP/M(whee!). BUT it won't work with Promerge Plus either.

THE SKY IS FULL OF THUNDER

This time, with Arnor, it was a very different story either. They were very busy making Protext work on the Cray and I never got a fix for the KDS. So... Sshh children, whisper the name. You creep into a phone box (phone cards only please) and shout PEPPIATT! There's thunder in the sky (lines to Chelmsford are quite rough) and a voice comes down from the clouds: "I do like difficult problems, yes, I'll give it a try."

STEWART GETS IT RIGHT

Without either the specs of Promerge Plus, or of the KDS interface, Stewart rewrote the KDS loader for the Mk 2 and it works. So far, it has printed everything I have tried, except that it won't work properly with Quailtas.

That's presumably because the Qualitas program for running with Promerge Plus uses the standard settings for the KDS, whereas Stewart's prog doesn't. But for me that's far from crucial. For everything I want to do, it works. And if I don't need it, it stays out of the way. It makes the CPC into a fair 8-bit machine and reduces even more any wish I might have to change to another machine. Many thanks Stewart. May the sun shine out of your opcodes.

---

70 REM line 1190
80 REM Jumbo Code (or)
90 REM Elephants In Straw Hats

STARTING-UP GETS BIGGER

By this time the start-up program was getting too big 2.6K in 47 lines of Basic (what?) may not be much but it was a couple of K off the size of both Protext files, as the program stays in the Basic area after Protext is called, which is silly. All it had to do was fire up the KDS port and fix the keys, after which I wanted it to disappear. Again, I'm no programmer, so it took me some thought to remember that running a Basic program clears the previous program out of memory. So the solution is to have a big program that does most of the work, then runs a minimal program which gets rid of the big program and calls Protext. The second program (D2) has to have the drive specified in line 1190 because in the meantime the CPC may have logged onto B.

---

1 ¦P,"opt 24":¦P .

Fig 2. The massive "D2"

EXTERNAL COMMANDS

I put the minimum into "D2". Ideally it should just say "1 ¦p" but there's a minor problem with external commands to Protext. Some seem to work even though you run another program before ¦P. Others, not. I haven't done a deep analysis of this but the way it works out here is that I could load the printer driver in line 110 of

"disc" but the configuring of protext with "Opt 24", which suppresses the ruler line and turns off right justify, only works from "D2". Still, I get within 169 bytes of the maximum, which isn't bad. It definitely beats losing 2K.

---

100 REM lines 14 to 108

I'm very shy about showing anybody "disc" and "D2". I'm sure that "disc" (Fig 1.) must be a mess, very uneconomical but it does work (he said defensively). The key definitions are useful on my NEC P2200. I've got a bunch of font changes there that suit the NEC. You could put in anything else that you were minded to, provided that you expand the "Tokens" area if you put in any really big definitions.

---

110 REM Now the commercial

GET UTOPIA

If you can. "Disc" is much neater because Utopia assigns function keys simply. Utopia is really something else. You can use it without leaving Protext. Especially, it gives you instant disc sector editor, which means you can unerase right away after you've been particularly silly. You also get to look the directory tracks. You can grip the bytes. It's surprising how much friendlier the disc feels after that. From Utopia I have kept "Cat" and "¦Era *.bak" because life would be silly without them, "Tokens" and "Help" because both are useful at odd moments and !¦Protext" because it felt wrong to deny Motherhood.. If I was serious and I was into machine code (AAArgh!) I would of course have kept the call to Maxam. But I'm not and I didn't. I have printed out my function key definitions and those for Brainstorm keys, on a disc drive shaped piece of paper and tacked it onto the Amdrive, that sits on top of the built-in drive (the Amdrive was beautifully short and cheap). It hides the key and colour numbers but you only need those for Basic programming.

```
  1 RESTORE 1:SYMBOL AFTER 256:MEMORY HIMEM-30:m=HIMEM+1'kds M2 set-up
  2 FOR q= 1 TO m+25:READ a:POKE,a:NEXT
  3 m=m+4:FOR i=0 TO 2:POKE q+i,PEEK(&bdf1+i):NEXT
  4 h=INT(m/256):l=m-h*256:POKE &bdf2,1:POKE &bdf3,h
  5 DATA &fe,&0a,&37,&c8,&f5,&07,&30,&11,&06,&ef,&af,&ed,&79,&cb,&c7,&ed,
    &79,&cb,&87,&ed,&79,&cb,&c7,&ed,&79,&f1
  6 POKE &bd31,c3:POKE &bd32,&2b:POKE &bd33,&bd:CALL &bd58
 14 |TOKENS,250                'Makes some room for what follows
 16 KEY 0, CHR$(24)+"q"        'NLQ
 18 KEY 1, CHR$(24)+"u"        'underline
 20 KEY 2, CHR$(24)+"b"        'bold
 22 KEY 3, CHR$(24)+"s"        'subscript
 24 KEY 4, CHR$(24)+"e"        '12 cpi
 26 KEY 5, CHR$(24)+"n"        '10 cpi
 28 KEY 6, CHR&(24)+"t"        'superscript
 29 KEY 7, CHR$(24)+"i"        'italic
 30 KEY 8, CHR$(24)+"c"        'condensed
 34 KEY 9, CHR$(24)+"l"+CHR$(24)+"r" 'large
 36 KEY 10, CHR$(13)+"       " 'indented paras
 38 KEY 141,CHR$(24)+"h"       'enhanced
 40 KEY 142,CHR$(24)+"o"       'Souvenir
 42 KET 143,CHR$(24)+"v"       '12 cpi hi-speed
 44 KEY 144,CHR$(24)+"k"       'Super focus
 46 KEY 145,CHR&(24)+"j"       'Courier
 48 KEY 146,CHR$(24)+"m"       'OCR-B
 50 KEY 147,CHR$(24)+"w"       '15 cpi
 52 KEY 148,CHR$(24)+"s"+CHR$(24)+"c"'tiny print
 53 KEY 156,CHR$(24()+"p"      'proportinal
 54 KEY 158,CHR$(7)+"11"+CHR$(13)+CHR$(228)+CHR$(233)+CHR$(7)+"4"+CHR$(13)
    +CHR$(233)+CHR$(219)+CHR$(25)+CHR$(21)+CHR$(237)+">p1 10"+CHR$(13)+">
    tm 0"+CHR$(13)+">sm 20"+CHR$(25)+CHR$(219)+CHR$(11)+CHR$(25)+CHR$(252)
                                  'Isolate address for envelope
100 KEY DEF 50,1,&72,&52,149      '"R" Key def
102 KEY 149,CHR$(11)+CHR$(0)+"9"+CHR$(27)+CHR$(233)+CHR$(251)+CHR$(233)+CHR$
    (0)+"9"+CHR$(16)+CHR$(234)+CHR$(11)+CHR$(236) 'retrieve ruler line
104 KEY DEF 15,1,128,151,150             'f0 key def
106 KEY 151,CHR$(252)+"s"+CHR$(13)+CHR$(13)+CHR$(252)
                                  'Save and continue
108 KEY 150,CHR$(251)+CHR$(233)+CHR$(250)+CHR$(233)+CHR$(0)+"9"+CHR$(27)
    +CHR$(237)+CHR$(234)+CHR$(11)+CHR$(0)+"9"+CHR$(16)+CHR$(236)
                                  'Store ruler line
110 BORDER 26:INK 0,26:INK 1,0:|P,"pr.nec"    'Set the screen
                                  'load the printer driver
1000 RESTORE              '100 to 1180 selects drive B if loaded
1010 ii=48896
1030 FOR i=0 TO 49
1040 READ a$:a=VAL(CHR$(38)+a$)
1060 POKE ii+I,a
1080 NEXT
1120 DATA 21,30,bf,cd,d4,bc,3e,ff,cd,fb
1130 DATA 00,21,31,bf,cd,d4,bc,c5,e5,3e
1140 DATA 00,32,32,bf,1e,01,16,01,cd,1b
1150 DATA 00,e1,c1,d0,1e,01,16,03,cd,1b       Fig. 1 "DISC"
1160 DATA 00,d0,3e,01,32,32,bf,c9,81,87
1180 CALL &bf00:IF PEEK(&bf32) THEN |B
1190 RUN"a:d2
```

```
120 REM What is to be Done (or)
130 REM Driving a Hard Printer
```

GET IT ON PAPER

None of this is any use unless you get sweatily involved with your printer driver. After all isn't the whole object of the exercise to get the stuff onto paper. I'm told that people are put off by printer drivers. Well, okay but in Protext especially they are very simple. In fact, Printer Driver are Next to Godliness.

HAVE A BROWSE

The first thing is to decide what you want to do. Printer manuals can be rather terse but if you browse through manual you're bound to find things you'd like to do. The manual may list a Basic (what?) program to driver the printer. Forget it. It's a hundred times easier from Protext. You can use any letter to send any set of codes. The choice is arbitrary and it's yours. And you don't have to build it into the function keys. That's just more awkward at this stage. The normal Protext way of Ctrl/x + "letter" is much simpler when your trying things out.

```
140 REM For Example
```

CHARACTER'S PER SECOND

Here's an example; in line 42 of "disc", I've used "v" to set the 12 character per inch high speed mode of the NEC (it's supposed to go at 168 characters per second and it does shift quite fast). As you can see, I've assigned it shift/f3, so I don't now have to remember the Protext printer code I've used.

SENDING IT TO PRINT

Suppose you wanted to enter this code. You look it up in the printer manual. The characters to send to the printer are: 27 77 28 83 1. In command mode, enter "setprint" or "sp". You go through the option to "Set print options" by entering "n" for "no" and say "y" at "change control code".

Then tell it you want to define "v". You type just those three characters, with spaces and finally closed by (RETURN). When setprint asks you for a code for "off", in this case you enter 28 83 0 (RETURN). Then save the printer driver. That's all there is to it.

PRINTERS IN THE DRIVER SEAT

I only this example to emphasise that it's possible to enter quite a few characters and have it work. Most printer control codes are in fact simpler and have less numbers in them. I apologise if this is a bit simple but printer drivers did intimidate me a little to start with and it would have nice to have avuncular advice at the time. The thing is not to try and get it right all at once. Start from the Epson default driver that comes with Protext. Just replace some of the existing codes with your own and save it with a short name you'll remember (how about NEC? Suits me...) Then load it into Protext by going "pr nec". If you want to find your drivers with CAT, they have the extension ".BIN" as in "nec.bin". It is pretty useful to keep some record of what you've done.

```
150 PRINT "Different strokes"
```

BRINGING THINGS UP TO DATE

If your printer is very different (like the Juki) then look up the basic things you want to do, like underline and double strike, in the manual and then put them into a printer driver

(under, say "u" and "d") that you update gradually. It doesn't matter if you leave a lot of unwanted codes in the driver. Unless you call them up, they'll not do anything. The only one that gets used every time you print is the "@" code, which resets the printer each time you PRINT from Protext. This makes sure the printer is in a virginal state before you inject your new text. No nasty hold-overs from the previous file, like still being in condensed mode. The Epson reset code is 27 64. If your printer is different, it's a good idea to change that one first. If you don't want to try something out, use ">0C" stored commands to send trial codes from a file and observe the result. Sometimes it's much funnier than you thought but mostly it works.... It doesn't matter how many printer drivers you write. They're only small files. And you can have fun putting umlauts on things, or printing Danish "o"s by defining a code to go back and over print the previous character (this backspace is almost always 8). I gave examples of these in PwP1, for printing French accents.

```
160 PRINT "Fun fun fun... "
170 REM (till her Daddy took her
180 REM Protext away)
190 REM <Hi Joolz>
```

THE BIG BUILD UP

After helping to build printer drivers for other programs, I honestly think that AMSDOS Protext is the easiest program to match to a printer that

there is. It's so simple that it makes you understand the the process better and removes the fear of flying. Play with it, and enjoy.

```
200 END
```

PROTEXT BASHING

I think there's always a fair number of us bashing away with Protext now. Writing these aricles has been a lot of fun and just a bit intimidating. It's not my normal mode of expression. Several people have said they've enjoyed PwP1 and 2 and I'm vain enough to believe them. But I don't want to go round in ever diminishing circles till I vanish up my own Ctrl/Clr.

FLOATING IDEAS ABOUT

So could we try and experiment? If there are any Protext queries floating out there, write in and ask. It'll give Paul an idea of what you want to talk about and I'll do my best either to think of a solution, or find someone who can. And anybody who has a good idea that I've missed out, write in!

FREAKING OUT WITH PROMERGE

For instance there's Promerge. I've been round the manual and I've done some obvious things for fun but is there a furry Promerge freak out there? Have you written an ambitious Promerge application, a database or an accounts system? I know it's feasible but I'd love to see it done. Write in and tell us all. You have nothing to lose but your discretion.

GPAINT

A "POWER TO THE PUBLIC" REVIEW
by RICHARD AVERY

"You can't produce quality piccies with a PD art prog" said the strange old bloke "You can with Gpaint" I said "and I will prove it."

INTRO
As us sensible people know, the strange hypnotic world of the Public Domain contains some super games, useful utilities, boring demos and lots more. In fact, some programs are excellent. Some programs are so good that they can easily rip the trousers off their commercial rivals.

Ah, I see you want proof, eh? Well, the disczine Another World (hmmm, that sounds familiar) is produced entirely on PD progs. The only non PD program that is used is DISCKIT3 to verify the customers discs.

Gpaint is one of those progs. It's super. And, it starts off a (probably) regular series, which reviews some of the excellent serious PD software that's floating around.

WHATSITALLABOUT?
In case you don't know, Gpaint is an excellent art package. It will happily work on a standard 464, and it's Plus compatible. It contains a wide choice of options for use in the process of creating your masterpieces. And, it's very easy to use.

If you are all ready drooling over the page, then I have some good news and bad news. The bad news is that you might end up with a very wet WACCI, so I suggest you go and prop up WACCI against the wall, and put a ZX81 mag under you mouth. The good news is that Gpaint can be found, alive and kicking on WACCI PD disc 30, complete with it's flat-mate, the equally-excellent value program RSX-LIB.

ICH SPRECHEN SIE DEUTSCH?
On loading up Gpaint, you might have a surprise or a nasty fright. All the menus are in German. AAARRRGGGHHH. However, there's nothing to worry about. All the menus are in the queen's english, and the icons are fairly easy to work out anyway.

The program comes with full instructions, but they are in German. But, Robot PD (who imported Gpaint into Britain) have enclosed an English summery of the instructions. However, you won't need this either if read this article and keep an eye out over the next few WACCI magazines.
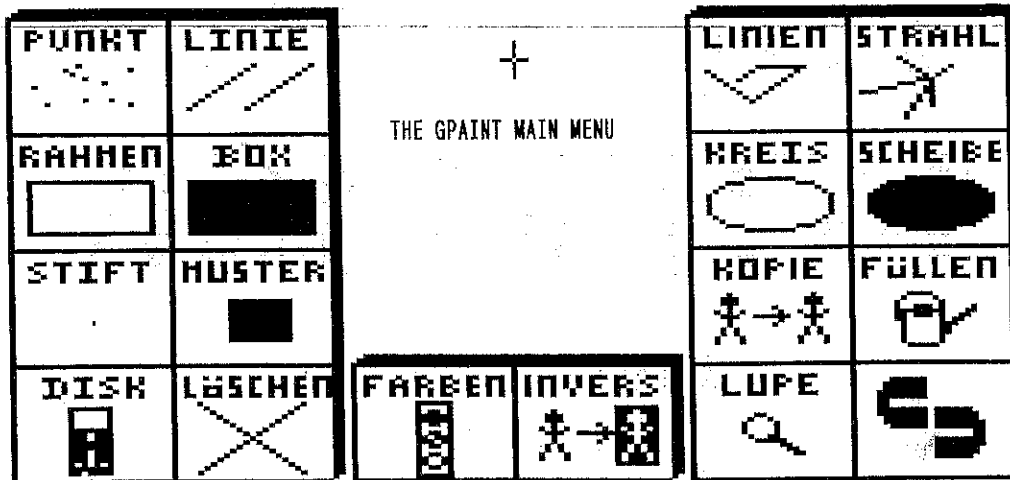
HOW DOES IT WORK?
Gpaint is worked by moving the cursor around the screen, either by keyboard or joystick. However, I don't think Gpaint is mouse compatible, but if you've got a mouse (and 128K) then you might as well go and buy OCP Advanced Art Studio.

Basically, the control method is simple and very easy to get the hang of. You can use either <RETURN>, <COPY> or the joystick <FIRE> button to select an option. The <SPACE> or <ESC> keys can be used to quit or to re-call the menu. By pressing <A> you can restart the option you are using and pressing <DEL> you can undo the last option used and <C> will change the colour.

"MY, WHAT FEATURES YOU'VE GOT GPAINT"

```
  PUNKT ........... A spray can.
  RAHMEN .......... This will draw a empty rectangle.
* STIFT ........... This will change the size of your brush.
* DISC ............ Displays the disc menu.
* FARBEN .......... Lets you choose a colour.
  LINIEN .......... Draws some connected lines.
  KREIS ........... Draws a empty circle.
* LUPE ............ Zooms in on a selected part of the screen.
  LINIE ........... Used for drawing straight lines.
  BOX ............. Ermm, This will draw a filled-in rectangle.
* MUSTER .......... Lets you select a pattern.
  LOSCHEN ......... Erases the picture on the screen.
  INVERS .......... Inverts the selected area.
  STRAHL .......... Draws some lines, al, from the same point.
  SCHEIBE ......... Draws a filled-in circle.
  FULLEN .......... Fills the screen (CPC464 compatible.)
* THE TWO MAGNETS . Contains the features not listed above.
```

PUNKT | LINIE | RAHMEN | BOX | STIFT | MUSTER | DISK | LÖSCHEN | FARBEN | INVERS | LUPE | LINIEN | STRAHL | KREIS | SCHEIBE | KOPIE | FÜLLEN

THE GPAINT MAIN MENU

WHAT'S IT GOT, BOB?
Gpaint has some very comprehensive features. Take a look at the box "My, what features you've got Gpaint". This should give you an idea of what Gpaint can do. Those marked with an asterisk (*) are explained in more detail in the main body of this article.

CHANGE MY BRUSH
By selecting stift, you can change the size of your brush. There's a choice of four sizes. These are small, middle size, big and a spray effect.

THE DISC MENU
Clicking on the disc icon will send you to the disc menu. Here, you can save, load, change drives, catalogue the disc, and erase files. But the best thing about the disc menu is a feature called "Load Section". This lets you load up a part of a screen.

So, how can that be useful? Well, for example, you can use it to copy, say a heading from one screen to another. This feature is very useful.

COLOUR ME GOOD
Farben lets you select the colours. When loaded Gpaint starts off in MODE one, so you have only got four colours to choose from. The MODE can be changed from the misc menu, accessed by clicking on those two magnets.

The program asks you to select colour one. By pressing fire on the top bar, you can then select colour two. Colour two is the background colour, so, say for example you were going to fill the screen with a brick pattern, then the cement will be in colour one, and the bricks will be in colour two.

By Pressing fire again, you can choose the colours out of the 27 available. This is how it works. First, You select the colour which you what to change. You are then taken to a new screen, with some rectangles placed along the middle. There are 27 rectangles, which are coloured in, but these are not all shown on the screen. Yep, these are in the order in which the palette goes (i.e. black, blue, bright blue, etc.) By using the cursor keys or joystick, the cursor is moved along the row.

THOUGH THE MAGNIFIE GLASS
Lupe is one of the best features about Gpaint. It lets you zoom in on a part on your picture, so you can edit your masterpiece, pixel by pixel. The pixels are reproduced to a fair size.

Pressing fire will print a box at the current cursor position. This box is the size of one pixel, and is printed in current chosen colour. And that's all there is to it. Yep, it's that easy. The zoom feature is very useful indeed when it comes to fancy loading screens, or for graphics for games. It adds the "shadow" effect that most games have (If you don't know what I mean, then take a look at the screen shot of Puzzle in Public Image in AA108), which gives a professional feel.

A PATTERNED DESIGN
By selecting Muster, you can select a pattern to replace the boring solid fill. There are nine to choose from, including a brick pattern. And, before anyone asks, all the fills work on a CPC464 without any problems and it a real plus of this program.

If you ever get bored with the patterns on offer, then you're going to like what I've got to say. Gpaint also has a built-in pattern editor. It works just like the colour selector and the zoom mode in a way. You first click on the bar, and select a pattern to edit. A close up of the pattern is then printed in a box in the middle of the screen. Using the cursor keys, you can edit the pattern, pixel by pixel.

MAGNETS
Clicking on the two magnets will take you to a menu which contains things like changing the Mode. But, there are some interesting features here. Gpaint includes a feature to enlarge or reduce your work. These both work by selecting an area of the screen to be reduced or enlarged. There is also a rotate and invert feature. These too work on the same system as enlarge and reduce feature.

And, of course, an art package wouldn't be complete without an printing option. Gpaint has, in fact, two. One is inverse print whilst the other is normal print.

AND FINALLY...
And that's about it. The version of Gpaint I've been looking at is version one. At the moment, I'm not sure if WACCI has a copy of Gpaint II, but I will see if I can get a copy, and perhaps give it a review.

Anyway, I'll be back, hopefully soon, with an art tutorial. So, stay tuned for that folks.

And so until next time, it's bye for now from me.

All the best,
Richard.

THE COOK INTERVIEW

ANGELA TALKS TO ROB BUCKLEY

Rob does not like the name Rob. He prefers Bob. But he can not use that name, because that is his dad's nickname. I commented that somebody I know is named Robert, and I call him by his last name. Rob did not entirely like it when I left a message on his answering machine calling him "Buckley".

INTRO
Before we go any further, Rob is not married, he is 25, he works as a CAD (Computer Aided Design) Operator, he is a Sagittarius (not that he believes in it) and his favourite colour is black <<not another one. -Paul>>

THE PUBLIC SIDE
Rob used to write programs for PD. He wrote the much famed, and apparently very good "Eve Of Shadows". When questioned on this adventure, he said that it was not very good. According to most people, it was excellent. So I don't know whether Rob is winding me up again, or is just very modest?

THE BEGINNING
I asked the question, "Why did you start programming?" Rob did not actually answer the question. He mumbled something about starting at 13, and thought it better than being mixed up with Ecstasy and Marijuana. Very sensible.

ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER DOLLAR
Many of you may have noticed that Rob has for some time been writing programs commercially, under the company name RADICAL SOFTWARE (is he a fan of the Turtles?). I asked Rob why the change over and he replied, "Purely for the money." Other than the money aspect of it, Rob said that he wanted a company that supplied new, and hopefully decent, games. The Amstrad desperately need to be taken seriously, and he was prepared to give the support it needed.

Rob's latest release is called Fluff, a truly excellent game. Where did the idea of Fluff come from? I put this question to Rob. He laughed - whether it was at me or the question I do not know. Rob was apparently playing around with Smart Plus (another of his wondrous creations) and he worked up this little character. He did some animation and routines. He liked the character so much, it just got bigger and better, and is now available in her own platform game.

LETHAL MOVES
Whilst on the subject of games, I asked about Lethal Moves. What was happening, and was it ever going to see the light of day? "It really depends on how Fluff, the general scene of things, and the market potential goes." Other than that, Rob said yes, he is going to finish the game off.

THE FUTURE?
I asked Rob why, with the decreasing amount of companies left, is he still supporting the CPC, what his plans are, not only for RADICAL, but also himself. "RADICAL will always go on in some form or other, be it commercial or not. I may go on to different formats, but RADICAL will always exist through me. I will also continue to supply existing stock for the CPC." And what about Rob himself. Long after other companies have left the market (and inevitably Amstrad Action closing at some point) will he still support the CPC in some way?

THE PLUS SIDE
Why does Rob seem to favour the Plus, over the normal CPC. Both FLUFF and SMART PLUS (a drawing package) are for the Plus, what will be next?
Well, you see, the thing is, Rob wants not only to take advantage of the extra capabilities of the Plus, but he also wants to produce something new and mould breaking. In fact, anything that will let Rob have better graphics and be more shocking (in the quality of programs) he will have a go at, even if he does not entirely know what he is doing, he will get help, and see the project through.

FAVOURITE BITS AND BOBS...
Okay, now we are getting to the end bit. Rob's favourite CPC utility is Laser Genius, which is, he comments, "...an assembler. Actually a very good assembler, which is much underrated." His favourite CPC add-on is an extra disc drive. Rob's favourite CPC game (I told him not to include his own creations) has to be "Sorcery", but his all time favourite is "Shining in the Darkness", which is a roleplaying game on the Mega Drive. The computers that Rob owns are the following: 464, 664, (ATARI) ST, XT PC, BBC and a Spectrum. He did also have a working 6128 Plus but, he blew it up trying to use a monitor other than an Amstrad

one. That is Alan Sugar's way of getting his own back.

AND THERE'S MORE...
Here's a new question I thought of, "Rob, what is your philosophy of life?" "Live slow, die young." he answers. At this point I can imagine Rob with long hair, yellow flared trousers and a flowery shirt with a collar the size of Big Ben.

THE TOTTENHAM BOSS
And what does Rob think about Alan Sugar (I asked for words that were printable)? "Alan Sugar is very stupid for not supporting any of his machines." Could not have said it better it myself.

I would like to say that I like Rob Buckley, but in my opinion, he is one of those people who have to suck a Polo mint as thin as they can, with out breaking it. Rob has a dry sense of humour. Everything he says, you have to take with not a pinch of salt, a whole bucket full.

I don't know whether it is just me, but he likes winding people up. His sense of humour I like, dry, subtle and satirical. He is a Paul Merton sort of bloke. Rob has also been described as a rebel. Many people I have spoken to agree. If someone says it can't be done, then Rob is the type of person who does his damnedest to do it.

HISTORICAL NOTE
I actually interviewed Rob before I started working with him for Amstrad Action. I have found that to get stuff out of him, it is no good being nice as you have to nag and shout at him.

CONCLUSION
Rob is also a very good programmer. There is not much he does not know (I have asked him some of the most obscure questions).

If you want to buy some stuff from him, or just ask his advice about something, which he will be only too pleased to help you with, the give him a ring on 081 856 8402, and if you really want to get on his good side, send him a turnip!

I have decided that Rob is all right <<no, he's half left -Paul.>> What he does do, he puts maximum effort into, like winding me up. He can stay serious for more than about a minute ... I have timed it, it was 3!

Angela Cook
News at WACCI
at Radical Software
June and October 1994

MICRODESIGN

THE REVIEW
BY STAMPER

EXTRA

Some months ago (five or six to be exact or thereabouts), I was volunteered to produce a Programme for the local ladies guild by "Her Indoors "and to do so I required some large lettering to produce the same. It was either use Stop Press or MicroDesign.

THE OUTCOME
I had been in touch with Simon Cobb about a programme he had, to produce headline fonts and decided to give it a go. The outcome was that I dug into the reserves of cash and eventually received MicroDesign Extra, but not before I had already done the programme with Stop Press.

I naturally played about with MD Extra but did not need to use it immediately. However, just before going away on a late summer holiday, Peter Campbell from Campursoft asked had I a copy of MD Extra since Campursoft had taken over MD Extra. Since I had, the net result was volunteering to do a review of same.

WHAT'S ON IT
Side one of the disc is devoted to the Headline Fonts, plus a few clip art files, and side two has an excellent set of files for printing music in all sorts of forms.

There are six Headline fonts of various sizes and when loaded onto MicroDesign they are from 32 pixels to 48 pixels in height.

For those of you who are familiar with typefaces, Headline one prints out in 72 point HELVETICA condensed; the second one is 72 point TIMES NEW ROMAN and these two use up 35 pixels in height when loaded into MicroDesign. Headline three is very similiar to HORATIO fonts and prints out at about 96 point.

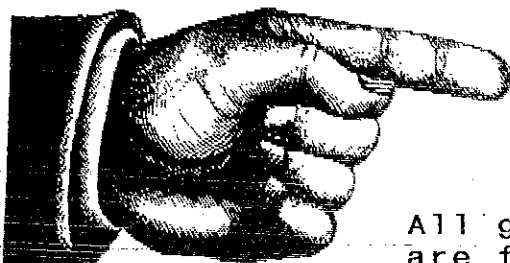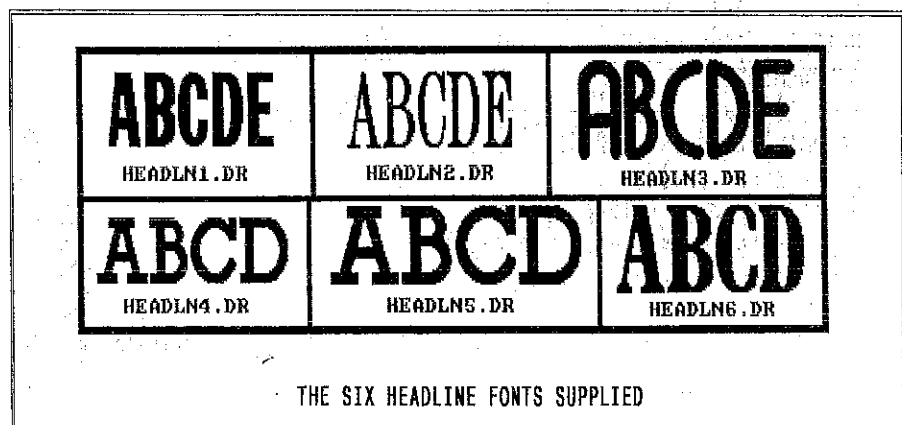Headlines four and five are of ROCKWELL BOLD and are 60 and 72 points high, covering 32 and 35 pixels when loaded into MD.

I do not recognise the sixth Headline but all six of them are shown for you to see.

USING THE FONTS
When using the larger headline fonts it is necessary to remove the icon window at the bottom of the screen, using CTRL-ESC, to reveal all the letters in the DESIGN Window.
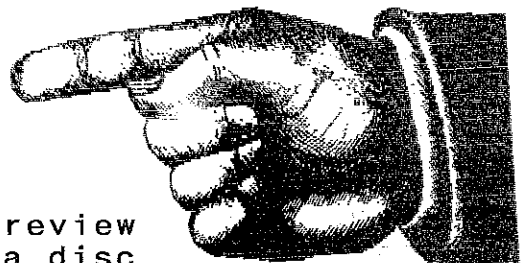
It is also IMPERATIVE that you ensure that the f8 KEY has been pressed to give transparent mode. How many of us (me included) who have been placing Icons on the screen only to find that we are erasing half the

ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE
HEADLN1.DR	HEADLN2.DR	HEADLN3.DR
ABCD	ABCD	ABCD
HEADLN4.DR	HEADLN5.DR	HEADLN6.DR

THE SIX HEADLINE FONTS SUPPLIED

MD EXTRA

by

CAMPURSOFT

All graphics in this review
are from the MD Extra disc

MICRO DE

ABCDEFGHIJKLM
NOPQRSTUVWXYZ

DESIGN
MENU....X
ZOOM....Z
Block...B

BLOCK OPS
Erase...E
Move....M
Kopy....K
Store...S

Oval....O
Diamond.D
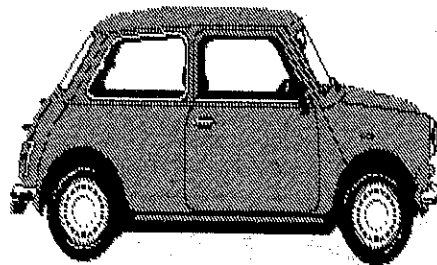Triangl.T
Flood
Writ....W

Set 1

When using the larger headline fonts, remove the icon window by pressing CONTROL-ESC to reveal all the letters in the DESIGN window.

Make sure the f8 key has been pressed to give transparent mode

THE METHOD NEEDED TO DESIGN AND PLACE HEADLINE FONTS

previous icon? Perhaps we should read the MD manual occasionally.

I found that when I required to use the Headline fonts for any purpose, it was necessary to load the font complete leaving sufficient room at the top of the DESIGN page for the headline to be written. since the fonts are in .DR mode the block OPS method is used with the KOPY used to place the letter. Thirteen letters are all that can be positioned at the top of the DESIGN page and then transfer into LAYOUT and place the head line in it's eventual position by using BLOCK to place it again.

CLIP ART TIME
Also included on side one are some clip art .DR files of "Happy Birthday, Merry Christmas, empty clouds, a mini car and lines of different widths.
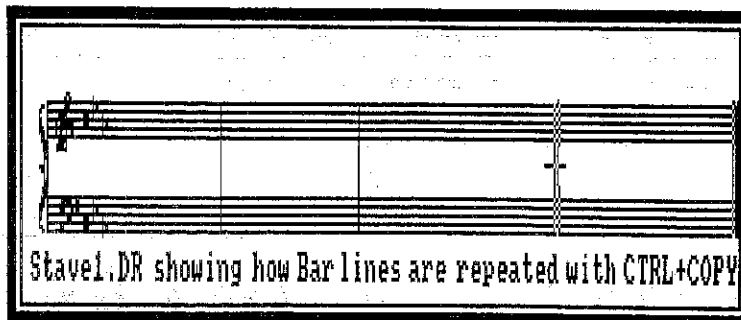

LISZT'S HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY NUMBER TWO

PRINTING MUSIC

When one is in FILING mode in MicroDesign, NEW is selected from the filing menu and choose 3:STRIP. This gives you the long narrow screen.
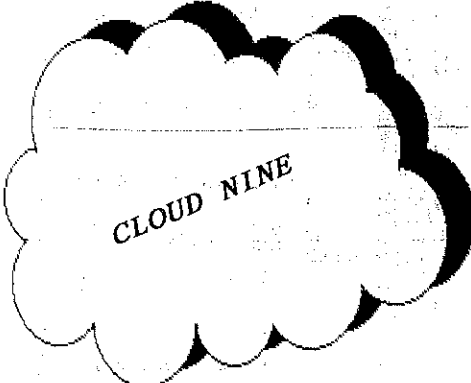
Select LOAD .IC by pressing f4 Key and load MUSIC123.IC set which contains all the musical symbols. There are some 34 of them and one can use the "Rotate Icon" when one is positioning notes at the top or the bottom of the Stave.

CLOUD NINE

LOAD UP

Pressing the F1 key to load a DR file, choosing STAVE1.DR and you are presented with one of the Staves available. If you need a KEY SIGNATURE there are thirteen signatures to choose from. It is then loaded at the left hand edge of the window. For example, loading the file KEYCSHP.DR would load into MicroDesign the C Sharp key signature.

Once again it is ESSENTIAL to use the f8 key to give transparent mode. Decide where you want the bar lines to be and KOPY them from the LAYOUT page as BLOCKS from the one provided at the end of the Stave. Use the CTRL-COPY key combination to repeat the KOPY function.

After positioning the bar lines, move to the DESIGN PAGE and one will be able to position the relevant musical icons on the stave to produce the music ready for printing. The lines of the staves are eight pixels apart, so by holding down CONTROL it is easy to jump between them. It is also possible to copy groups of notes, particularly in the bass line, where the same passage occurs more than once. The example shown <<on the last page. -Paul>> is part of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No 2.

Stave1.DR showing how Bar lines are repeated with CTRL+COPY

Block...B
BLOCK OPS
Erase...E
Move....M
Kopy....K

KEYS f1-f9

Music with a separate vocal or solo part can be entered using the stave contained in the file SONGST1.DR

There are two versions of the BASS clef included, the second kind being in the .DR files BSCLEF2.DR, STAVE2.DR and SONGST2.DR

Happy Birthday

When a line of music has been completed, save it and start again with a clear stave for the next line. You'll learn by your own mistakes.

FOR SALE

TO SUM UP

I found the Headline fonts easier to handle after I had used them a while. The part I was not on top line with was when I had to have a headline that was more than thirteen Characters long. It was awkward but possible to overcome by using Store and Glue.

I certainly thought the music programme was excellent and enjoyed the benefaction of producing printed music. However I can hear some of you asking "What use is it to me?" My honest answer would be:- If you are into music either learning an instrument, a budding composer or a

music teacher then not a lot, BUT if you are a teacher then I am sure your music colleague will be full of thanks when you volunteer to print out music for them.

The Headline fonts are another asset that MicroDesign has attracted and well worth having.

STAR BURST
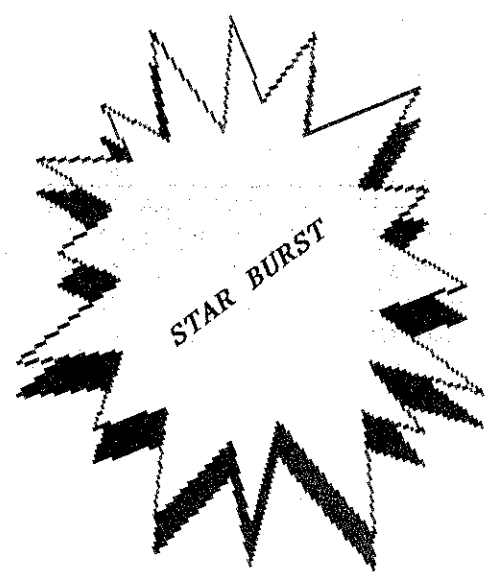
AND FINALLY...

The package is available from CampurSoft and costs £14.95 but Peter Campbell has agreed to allow a 10% discount to WACCI members of £1.50 thus making it available for £13.50.

Any problems you may have when you buy and use it, either give Peter or myself a ring.   *Stamper.*

PD SCENE

DAVID CROOKES BRINGS THE WORLD OF PD INTO YOUR HOME

Question: How do you sort out the rough from the smooth in PD land? Answer: You carefully disect every word on this page.

INTRO

One of the differences between a top notch computer like the CPC and a games only console is a computer has a keyboard. Consoles don't funnily enough. So what this tends to mean is that you can't input a fifty thousand word thesis into a Super NES which only has a joypad with a couple of letters on it.

PROBLEMS?

There is a problem with a keyboard though. If you're an absolute novice at typing then punching merrily away at the keyboard is a far away dream. Take yourself back to when you began to use your computer (if you're not already at the beginners stage) and you'll certainly remember your attempts at two finger typing at the excrutiatingly slow speed of three words a minute.

ADVERT TIME

And this is the ideal spot to insert the advertising blurb: to solve all of this you only need to look in the public domain and you'll find some typing tutorial packages. And here's two of them.

TYPING

If comprehensive tutorials are your thing then TYPING has just the tonic. Assuming you have absolutely no experience at typing at all, this programme will soon set itself up, take a deep breath and start teaching.

It provides fifty exercises with each one beginning with a bit of drill practise. What this does is tell you where to corectly position your little pinkies on the keyboard. Once done you are taken onto a small game. Is it fun? Is Jeremy Beadle a nice bloke? The game's functional, it does the job and pretty darned well too.

Letters flash up on the screen and the aim of the "game" is to thump the corresponding letter on your keyboard as soon as possible. Do that and another letter will pop up and you do it until the "game" ends. And that's it. No breathtaking graphics, no thumping bass line and no exilerating gameplay either but as I said before this is a serious utility with a purpose and that is served really well. A few hours of doing this and you'll soon know where the keys are.

The final step of your learning journey takes you to sentences. Here you must quickly type in the given sentence. Because the CPC is a friendly beast, it wont throw a wobbly if you type in the wrong letter; it'll just ignore it so it won't slow you down.

Anyway, to the verdict. Even though it completes its aim and will almost certainly teach you how to competently type away without any problems, it's a little dull. A program like this needs to encourage the user to carry on using it but unfortunately the low glitz factor means that the urge to give it a go is lowered. There again, if you don't care about presentation, you'll love it. **SCORE 70%**

KEYBOARD TRAINING PROGRAM

With an impressive looking name like that, how can you not take an interest. But professional names do not make a program great so lets take an in depth gander.

Six kilobytes of code suggests that the package won't be as comprehensive as Typing and that hunch is correct. It definitely doesn't have the same amount of features but it more than makes up for that in its encouraging and pretty appearance.

There is also another major plus, the timer. It's ideal for keeping a check on how fast you type and comparing it with a professional typist's tally. It also means people who can already type are able to see how advanced they are. This was sadly lacking in Typing.

There are similaraities. KTP has the same game as Typing had (ie. press the letter that flashes up on screen) and it also has the copy-a-passage feature, too. However it is not as heavy going and the lightness means you can dip into it at any time without being sent to sleep. **SCORE:73%**

AXYS

Every now and then everybody needs a spot of light relief from a heavy night of computing or whatever and so it would seem a sensible idea to get this from Axys.

It's a Greek game and seems to have been written by demo writers. The loading sequence looks fantastic and has many snazzy effects with scrolling and rotations etc., going on all over the place.

Axys is a shoot-em-up which is just ideal for relieving your tension. Blasting things into oblivious hell is definitly my cup of tea after a hard day and Axys makes it even more worthwhile with its stunning graphics.

As far as the shoot-em-up genre goes, Axys is one which you should really think about adding to your collection. **SCORE: 83%**

David Crookes.

OUT OF SORTS

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT - STUART GASCOIGNE SORTS IT OUT

I'm going to start this month with a question - just what do we mean by "order"? Don't worry, it's a rhetorical question, you don't have to answer it, I'll get around to it myself eventually.

GREATER THAN POLITICS

My local tory politician thinks I mean Laura Norder, but in computer speak it means something much more interesting. Ordering is something done to a list of items, the result of which is a new list where the same items are in some specified relationship to each other. The list is then said to be in order. What's that actually mean though? So far I've concentrated on sorting numbers and the relationship I've used has been "less than or equal to". When the list is just numbers you have to get a bit contrived to think of any other ordering. (Greater than, which gives a list in decreasing order, is just the same list read backwards.) Most people asked to put numbers in order, either produce a increasing or decreasing list.

With a list of text items, however, the answer isn't quite so obvious. CPC Basic, in common with most other languages, provides a means of comparing strings using >, =, and <. Sticking to single character strings for the moment to make life easier, what is the result of comparing one character with another? To answer this, we need to know the collating sequence used by the computer. The CPC uses an extended ASCII sequence - the first 128 are standard ASCII, and the next 128 are CPC specials for graphics and other characters.

A TO ZEE

So to compare two characters we compare their ASCII values, which are just numbers. For instance to compare "A" and "z", we compare 65 ("A") and 122 ("z"), and noting that 65 is less than 122, we would put "A" before "z". No suprises there eh? If we were to compare "a" with "Z" though, we would

have 97 and 90 and conclude that "Z" comes before "a". You can find a full list of the character set ASCII values in your manual, or you can use the basic functions ASC("character") to give you an code, and CHR$(code) to give you a character.

Roughly speaking, the ASCII code sequence has space first, then numerals, then upper case letters, then lower case letters, with punctuation (brackets, commas etc) liberally sprinkled between these groups. Due to the foresight of the code designers, the numerals are in order 0-9 and the letters are in order a-z, so comparing ASCII codes will give alphabetical ordering.

AS EASY AS EBC?

As an aside, not all computers use the ASCII code. The other major standard is EBCDIC, which besides giving different values to characters, has numerals coming last instead of first. I also seem to have a vague recollection of the Spectrum using a code sequence all of its very own.

LARGE NUMBERS

So in comparing strings, we are actually comparing code values of characters, one at a time. Effectively every string is looked at as one great big number.

If you wish to try sorting strings, any one of the sorting programs given so far, can be adapted - just replace the array of numbers a() by an array of strings a$() wherever they appear. You will also have to change the routine that generates random values to start with, I suggest a loop that allows you to type in starting values.

One of the potential problems with sorting strings can be seen if we

think about a real life example (much as I hate to bring reality into this discussion). Imagine that your data describes people - name, addresses, membership details etc etc. For every person on the list you can easily have several hundred bytes of data.

If you want to sort the list into alphabetical order of name, any of the sorting techniques we've looked at would do, and all would suffer from the same snag. Whenever two items in the list had to be swapped, several hundred bytes of data would have to be moved both ways. Needless to say this takes time, and in languages other than Basic, may take an awful lot of effort as well, keeping track of variable length strings and memory usage. Is there any way to avoid this overhead? (That question isn't even rhetorical folks - the answer has to yes if he's spent all this time presenting it.)

Yes, of course there is. What you need is some way of letting the data stay where it is, while you know where it should be. Some languages, like Pascal or C, come complete with a ready made way of doing this - a data type called a 'pointer'.

What does a pointer do? Well it, erm, points. It is very easy to set up pointer variables in Basic. All we need is an integer array 'p', that holds the subscripts of the items in the array being pointed to. To show how it works lets do a very small bubble sort on some strings -

i	p(i)	a$(i)
1	1 =====	WOT NO 3" DISKS?
2	2 =====	WHERE'S UNCLE CLIVE
3	3 =====	WACCI IS GREAT

To start with we initialise p(i) to contain i, which points it at a$(i). Whenever we want to look at a string, we don't use its subscript directly, we use the value of a pointer as the

subscript. So first we compare the first two strings, which are the one pointed to by the first pointer and the one pointed to by the second pointer - a$(p(1)) and a$(p(2)). They are out of order, so we swap. We don't swap the data, just the pointers to the data, so p(1) gets to be 2 and p(2) gets to be 1.

```
i    p(i)   a$(i)
1    2 ═╳═ WOT NO 3" DISKS?
2    1 ═╳═ WHERE'S UNCLE CLIVE
3    3 ═══ WACCI IS GREAT
```

To look at the first item in the list we would still use a$(p(1)), which now gives us a$(2). After going all the way through the sort, comparing data only via pointers, and only swapping pointers we get to this

```
i    p(i)   a$(i)
1    3 ═╳╳═ WOT NO 3" DISKS?
2    2 ═╳╳═ WHERE'S UNCLE CLIVE
3    1 ═╳═ WACCI IS GREAT
```

Notice that the data hasn't moved at all. To read it out in order we go via the pointers again e.g.

FOR i=1 to 3:PRINT a$(p(i)):NEXT

Here are some more ideas that might come in useful for you, mostly based on using different keys to sort on. To keep it simple, I'll assume that we're using a simple bubble sort with no pointers - you can easily extend it to others if you wish.

If you want to ignore the case of letters when sorting, convert both strings being compared to uppercase (or lowercase, it doesn't matter) eg

IF UPPER$(a$(i))>UPPER$(a$(i+1))
   THEN *SWAP*.

To use only a portion of text as a key rather than the whole lot, chop out the bit you need with MID$, eg to work on the first 4 characters only

IF MID$(a$(i),1,4)>MID$(a$(i+1),1,4)
   THEN *SWAP*.

To use more than one key, you need to use more than one comparison. For example, to sort on say surname then forename, you swap if the surnames are out of order, but if they are the same, you have to test forenames as well -

IF surname$(i)>surname$(i+1) OR
   (surname$(i)=surname$(i+1) AND
   forename$(i)>forename$(i+1)) THEN
   SWAP.

If you can guarantee that all the names have the same length (some will be padded out with spaces) then you can get the same effect by concatenating the variables to be used as keys and doing a single comparison on the result. The same technique can be extended to as many keys as necessary.

How about producing a 'rhyming dictonary'? This is one sorted on the last letter in a word, then second to last etc. The easiest way, if basic allowed it, would be to define a function FNbackwards$ which given a string would turn it around for you. You need a loop in the function definition - some languages eg ZBASIC let you do this in functions, but Locomotive Basic won't. So I suggest using a loop to turn all the words backwards to start with, sorting them, and then turning them back the right way round before storing or printing.

AND FINALLY...
Lastly, before sorting your data, consider whether you really need to! For instance, if you are amending a list of data that is sorted, it is usually far more efficient to do the amendments in a way that maintains the order of the list, rather than tagging amendments on at the end, and then resorting it. The best structure for your data may not be a simple array. Structures such as linked lists or binary trees may suit the application far better. However, such things are subjects for another series. *TTFN*

MARKET STALL

Dear Members, judging by the numbers of telephone calls and adverts sent in, Market Stall has proved to be more work than we at first anticipated, so much so that this month our dear Editor had to employ a secretary to answer the telephone (at great cost I might add) and so we have decided to alter things slightly.

If you wish to buy any of the items advertised by WACCI would you please call me on 01922-476293. I am around most of the time but I do have three children (horrors) to feed and put to bed so please bear with me. Tea is about 4.30 and bed is 8.00pm so I'll leave you to decide when to call but please do bear the above in mind.

Paul will send me a list of the items WACCI will be offering, it will be on a first come first served basis if you don't happen to get want you want I will put you on my wanted list and if the item comes up for sale again you will get a note from me giving you a slight advantage. Thank you all for your support. *Happy Christmas, Angie.*

Advanced Art Studio c/w i/face Gen Mouse & Man £18
Lightpen and Software £15
HiSoft Pascal 80 CP/M with manual £15
CONTACT Alex Sanderson on Blackpool 0253 353024

6128 Green Monitor £15
6128 Manual £5
6128 System Discs £6
Proprint (Disc) £7
Assmb Lang Course Tape £2
Lazor Genius -The complete machine code development system (Disc) £3
All the above plus postage
WANTED Sim City on Disc
CONTACT Bob Miller, 55,Den Lane, Springhead, Oldham OL4 4NN Tel: 061-620-2118

Amstrad 6128 Plus (c/w C/PM disk, manual, joypad, Burnin Rubber & Basic cartridge). There is no monitor but I will include stereo speakers and leads to connect to a standard CTM 640/644 colour monitor £50
Dart Scanner for + machine (boxed) £20
DMP 3160 Printer Ex cond. (c/w lead, manual and spare ribbons) £40
Speedking Joystick £3

Amstrad JY2 Joystick £1
3" Disc head cleaner £2
NB:The price for software is negotiable by phone
Oddjob disc util, Instant Recall, Microdesign Plus, Funschool 1 2-5 years and 5-8 years. Funschool 2 under 6 yrs. Funschool 3 over 7 yrs. Learn Amstrad Basic (parts 1 & 2 tape). AJ Concept Disc, Amstrad Triple Compilation, 3D Stunt Rider. Hunchback, Strangeloop+, Mutant Monty, Mega Bonanza (100 progs), Sorcery+, Yie Ar Kung FU, They sold a Million, Computer Hits 6, Back to the Future, Elite Super Cauldron and Prehistorik 2. Cartridge Games: Pang, World of Sports, Pro Tennis Tour.
Used Discs Mainly Maxwell & Amsoft 40 in total. 12 Discks of Microdesign clip art £10
I am willing to sell all the above for £160 + p&p
CONTACT Russell Macdonald 86, Craigpark Circle, Ellon, Aberdeenshire AB41 9FJ Tel: 0358-723230

6128 Keyboard £50
3.5" Drive/RAMDOS £40

CPM+/Logo etc £12
Multiface2 £25
6 slot Romboard £20
Romdos XL/1 sot Rombox £15
DES (2 Roms) £15
Protext CPM £35
MD+ & Pageprinter £25
AMX Mouse & Interface £25
R T Smith Wargames £8
Airbourne Ranger (Disc) £5
Hero Quest (Disc) £3
Xexor £8
DMP 2000 Printer £25
2nd Drive Switch £3
Bonzo Hack Pack £8
Home Accounts (SD) £8
Stardump £6
Keyboard Extn Leads £4
Tape Recorder CPC Lead £10
Green Monitor £25
3" Disc Drive (ex 664) £25
3" Discs (per 10) £12
ALL THE ABOVE INCLUDE P&P PRICES ARE NEGOTIABLE.
CONTACT: Dave Cordner, 54 Wayne Avenue, Hereford. HR2 6HY Tel: 0432-275828

CTM 640 Colour Monitor (to be collected)
DDI-I Drisc drive with Interface and Manual.
DK'Tronics 64K Memory
"Craven" ROM Board with fitted 40025 (6128) ROM and six available ROM Sockets. *NO REASONABLE OFFER REFUSED. PLEASE*

CONTACT:
Harry Gubby, 1 Maplewood Paddock, Acomb, York, YO2 3LB Tel: 01904-792370.

The following TAPE GAMES all boxed and with instructions £1.00 each.
Special Action: Driller:
Captain Blood: The
Vindicator: Daley
Thompson's Olympic
Challenge: 5DI: Cisco
Heat: Paperboy 2:
Nightbreed: Boulder Dash:
Action Pack: Rock &
Wrestle: I.Ball: Seabase
Delta: Thrust.
PLEASE CONTACT:
Mark Johnson, 13 Ashway, Corringham, Stanford-Le-Hope. Essex. Tel: 01375-677631.

The following are offered by WACCI. Please ring Angie for availability.

ProPrint ROM inc man £10
Toolkit ROM no manual £5
Silicon Disc ROM no man £5
CP/M 2 ROMs inc manual £15
Pandora (disc) £3
Bonzo Hack pack and Super Meddler (disc) £3
PS-Headings Plus £2
Bonzo Procopy £2
Pro-Ext no man (disc) £2

Honeysoft RS232 port inc manual £10
6128 K/board ABBA sw £40
KDS 6 socket Romboard uncased no manual £8
Dk'tronics 256K memory exp inc manual and disc £15
Amstrad RS232 port inc manual £5
V21/23 Modem by Pace inc power supply and manual £8
MFU CP/M v4 inc manual £3
The following are on disc
Star Wars £1
The Empire Strikes back £1
Steve Davis Snooker £1
3D Pool £1
Leader Board £1
The Games £1
Colossus 4 Chess £1
Chicago 30's £1
Robocop £1
Fun School 2 £1
Fun School 3 £1
Fun School 4 £1
Word Style WP £1
Silk Worm £1
Tempest £1

THE BASIC IDEA

A REVIEW BY STEWART PEPPIATT

Have you ever felt inclined to try to type in a "Type-In" from Amstrad Action, but got cold feet at the thought of debugging it afterwards? Have you typed in a "Type-In", only to find it generates error messages (if you're lucky), or crashes irretrievably (if you aren't)? Have you read about basic BASIC programming, but want to add a bit of something extra? Do you think the Amstrad manual whets your appetite, but doesn't provide a meal?

THE ANSWER?
If you answer yes to more than one of the above questions, then you are the sort of person this latest release is aimed at. You might call it a survival kit for those wandering out of the civilised safety of ready built software into the dangerous jungle of do-it-yourself.

DOUBLE SIDED AND GREEN
The kit comprises two parts, a 42 page manual, on white paper with a green message on the front, and a double-sided disc. (I know all CPC disc are double sided, but this one's actually got programs on both sides, so don't buy it thinking at least you can use one side as a blank.)

WHAT'S IN IT?
The manual contains hints, comments, a few simple tables, much advice and instructions on how to use the disc. The disc contains the programs referred to in the text (surprise, surprise!), including two games intended to demonstrate some of the methods described in the manual. The programs are not protected, so can be listed and analysed as necessary. It's all driven by a simple menu system, though I found it quicker just to run the programs directly.

THE BASIC IDEA

by Sean McManus

Published by Campursoft

SECTION ONE
The manual itself is starts with a few quick tips, before plunging into a list of the error messages generated by BASIC. This is similar to the list in the computer manual, though the explanations are more detailed, and include hints on how to locate the exact source of the problem. This is followed by comments on tape loading errors, and how to alleviate them. Strangely, there are no references to disc hardware problems - either he's been lucky in never encountering them, or I've had more than my fair share!

SECTION TWO
The next section shows where the CPC464 and CPC6128 differ in their versions of BASIC, mainly due to upgrading of the software on the newer machine. The process of bypassing the new commands to allow programs to run on the 464 he refers to as "downgrading", and some good, usable

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methods are given. He's missed the simplest replacement for the DEC$ function however - 464 owners just need to use the strange format:

```
a$ = DEC$((pi,"##.###")
```

---

to provide the equivalent to PRINT USING in formatting string variables. (You must include the double brackets at the beginning - the original BASIC was intended to have the DEC$ function, but a slight bug in the program caused the requirement for the extra bracket, so Amstrad didn't bother publicising it.) Another hint: there is also a quicker way to set the graphics pen and paper on the 464 than he provides:

```
CALL &BBDE ,0,0,0   (set graphics pen)
CALL &BBE1 ,0,0   (set graphics paper)
```

In both cases, the number of commas is the number of the ink you wish to set. It doesn't look too pretty, but it really does work! *<<464 owners please note this fix. -Paul>>*
  The next three pages are devoted to protection, against both prying eyes and software pirates. How much interest this will be to programmers at this level, I'm not sure. Protection against a multiface is provided by a program on the disc, although again this does seem a bit of overkill. *<<I agree -Paul>>*

THE BODY BUILDING SECTION

A section on "Character Building" follows - in other words, use of the user defined symbols, the TAG command, the XOR mode etc. A control code table is included, although this is strange, as it is actually a cut-down version of the one in the manual. Again, good general tips are given, and programs on the disc include a utility to help define your own characters (although I found the auto repeat on the key to be set awkwardly, as it is possible to access the program, this can very easily be changed.)
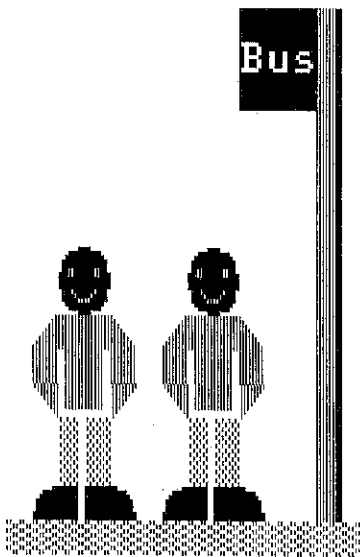
CHARACTER BUILDING USING AN OLD HOLLIES TUNE AS A THEME!

THE NEXT SECTION

Section five - "The Colour of Magic" is not a reprint of the science fiction spoof of the same name, but is centred around obtaining animation by switching inks. This is a useful technique, and can easily form the basis for simple but effective games and screens. The demonstrations supplied on the disc are rather simple, and might actually put people off trying it themselves, especially the time it takes to set them up (although the effect is fast enough in the final picture). If you can, get hold of the excellent "Advanced Art Studio" for a better demonstration, and for the tools to produce screens of your own.

A VERY SOUND SECTION

The obligatory section on sound again tries to expand on the computer manual, although in this case I found it rather sketchy, with no reference to sound queues or synchronising different channels for example. The relevant program this time is an envelope definer. "The Road to Code" (i.e. machine code) which follows is also short, and jumps around from RSX's to setting HIMEM to reducing the length of BASIC programs to relocating m/c programs to investigating other peoples programming..., all in the space of a few paragraphs. Machine code is really a whole book in itself, and is best accomplished with a decent assembler and monitor, so don't expect this section to do any more than whet your appetite or put you off for good.

SICK OR SLICK SPRITES?

The next section on sprites is probably the most useful to beginners wanting to produce an arcade-type game. Sprites are of course small shapes (often nasty looking) which move around the screen, bumping into other sprites, walls and things. The advantage of using sprites is normally that someone else has written the hard bits for you already, and supplied them as machine code routines accessible either through RSX's (eg ¦SPRITE,s,x,y), or the CALL command. You can write a simple BASIC program to control the movements by using the appropriate machine code call. The result should be smoother, faster, slicker movements compared with the jerky programs usually obtained from a BASIC-only program. Two versions of sprite handlers are included on the disc, together with a sprite definer to help you draw the nasty creatures in the first place. Again a demonstration program is available for inspection, which gives an indication of the increase in speed resulting.

AND FINALLY...

Finally, there are two games - partly as a bit of light relief, but mainly as more complete demonstrations of the techniques described. These are MISFIT (based on the sliding jigsaw game), and THE BUGS, a three-part game which "demonstrate four different types of game" (Sean's words, not mine). Unfortunately, these would not run

directly on my CPC464 without some modification. Even the version specifically for the 464 contains the problem with DATA statements which he had previously pointed out himself.

ERRMMMM - THE BUGS

CONCLUSION TIME

As a whole, I found the package interesting and informative, with a few nice touches of humour - has your program ever been datorially challenged? It does fill a gap in published material for the beginner wishing to push on from simple BASIC programs, but not prepared to tackle full-blooded machine code programming. However, it is certainly not a complete course, rather a handy reference. It lacks a section on "good programming techniques", for example, which beginners would be well advised to adopt in their formative years. (And which are incidentally absent in the demonstration programs, abandoned in the quest for reducing program size. Multi-statement lines are notoriously difficult to debug, and should be avoided even more than GOTO statements!) Preventing errors in the first place should perhaps have been given as much prominence as the subsequent error-hunt. I look forward to an enlarged second edition, which runs equally well on the CPC464.

Best wishes, Stuart.

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