

MICRO COMPUTER

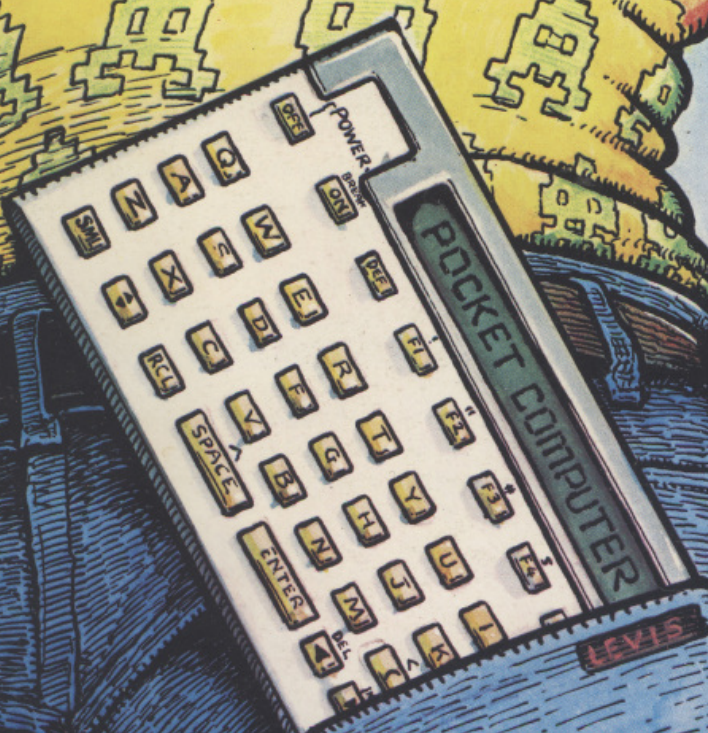
PRINTOUT

A PLAIN MAN'S GUIDE TO
PERSONAL COMPUTING

Free Inside:-
Instant Intro
to Computing

MAY 1982

95p



THE COMPUTER IN YOUR POCKET

J.R.'s computer: the new TI 99/4A
from Texas Instruments

Turbocharge your programs
with a compiler!

Hardware: how it works

Which Business System?

Anagram-cracker listing



audiogenic LTD

***** VIC SOFTWARE SCOOP !!!!! *****

THE BEST VIC PROGRAMS YET - AVAILABLE FROM AUDIOGENIC NOW !!!!!

- VP010 AMOK....The halls of AMOK are populated by robots out of control and out to get you. To save yourself you must be quick on the draw and fast on your feet. PRICE £6.99
- VP011 SIMPLE SIMON....Puts your dexterity and memory to test. You have to follow a sequence of flashing colour bars and tones. PRICE £6.99
- VP012 ViCalc....Turns the VIC into an easy to use programmable calculator. Ten memories are displayed on the screen along with four working registers. Using single keystrokes all normal addition, multiplication etc. and scientific functions may be undertaken, as well as compound interest and percentage. Precision may be set to round up the last digit from 0 to 9 decimal places. PRICE £8.99
- VP016 A-MAZ-ING....Needs 3K expansion. Fast action gobbler game - eat the dots and avoid the nasty ghosts. You can eat the ghosts when they change colour. PRICE £6.99
- VP023 MASTERWITS....Try to deduce the pattern of four colours from the six colours at your disposal, while MASTERWITS gives you the clues. Rumour has it that seven tries is average!? PRICE £6.99
- VP024 KIDDIE CHECKERS....Teaches small children to play the game of draughts- Only looks one move ahead. PRICE £6.99
- VP025 WALL STREET....The stock market comes to life. Follow the market's rise and fall with cash, shares and hope. Sharp trading will win. PRICE £6.99
- VP026 ALIEN BLITZ....The Invader game for the VIC! How good are you at blasting aliens from the sky? Features nine playing levels. Watch out for the superhuman ninth! PRICE £7.99

***** PLUS COMING SOON *****

EDUCATIONAL

Programs presented in a highly entertaining and visual package.....

- VP029 SKYMATH
VP030 SPACE DIVISION

NEW GAMES!!!

- VP032 INVADER FALL
VP033 THE ALIEN
VP034 STAR WARS
VP035 METEOR RUN
VP014 SPIDERS FROM MARS
VP017 ROBOT BLASTERS
VP018 ASTRO TRANSPORTERS
VP019 3D INVADERS
VP022 BLASTOIDS

PERSONAL UTILITIES

- VP013 VPM VIC Securities Portfolio Management. Keeps track of your stocks and shares.
VP020 VICAT Your personal data base.
VP028 VITERM A For telephone communication with electronic bulletin boards, mail networks, The Source. Also allows operation as a dumb terminal.

***** INTRODUCING THE NEW RANGE OF VIC PROGRAMS FROM CREATIVE SOFTWARE OF CALIFORNIA *****

EDUCATIONAL

- VP044 HANGMAN
HANGMATH
VP045 MATH HURDLER
MONSTER MAZE

GAMES

- VP047 CODE MAKER
CODE BREAKER
VP046 SEAWOLF
BOUNCE OUT
VIC TRAP

PERSONAL UTILITIES

- VP040 LOAN ANALYZER
VP041 CAR COSTS
VP042 HOME INVENTORY
VP043 HOUSEHOLD FINANCE

***** CARTRIDGES *****

THE BEST OF THE GAMES PROGRAMS PLUS A PACKAGE OF PROGRAMMING UTILITIES WILL BE AVAILABLE SHORTLY IN CARTRIDGE FORM.

SOFTWARE HOUSES PLEASE NOTE !!!!! AUDIOGENIC CAN SUPPLY CARTRIDGE PARTS, PLASTIC MOULDINGS AND P.C.B.s FOR YOUR ROM PACKS. RING FOR DETAILS



ALL PRICES INCLUDE V.A.T.

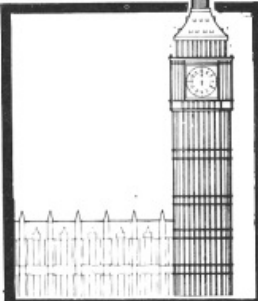
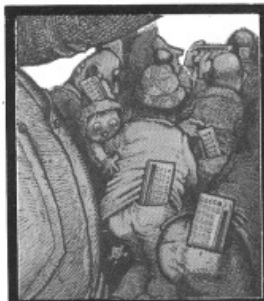
AVAILABLE FROM ALL GOOD DEALERS OR DIRECT FROM



AUDIOGENIC, P.O. Box 88, 34-36 Crown Street, Reading, Berks. Tel: Reading (0734) 595269

26 THE COMPUTER IN YOUR POCKET

There will be no escaping the new micro micros.



32 COMPUTERS IN POLITICS

Simon Hoggart takes a POKE at Westminster.

46 TEXAS

Computing's answer to 'Dallas' unveils an intriguing new computer.



58 TURBO CHARGE YOUR PROGRAMS

with BASIC compilers for PETS.

FEATURES

14 HOW TO BUY A PURCHASE LEDGER

Choosing the right package.

22 HOTLINE

The news from the *inside*.

42 DEAR MR EDITOR

Sound advice for first-time buyers.

56 PROGRAM DOCUMENTATION

How to get it right!

66 THE ENERGY CRISIS SIMULATION

Complete listing for this fascinating educational game.

72 WHICH BUSINESS SYSTEM?

Five typical computers compared.

82 ZX81 UTILITIES

Eight useful programs that prove it ain't a toy.

98 INSIDE TRADER

More 'off the record' info from our Gossip Columnist.

18 READ/WRITE

Where the readers fight back

36 HARDWARE - HOW IT WORKS

Jargon free explanation for complete beginners.

52 TRESPASSERS WON'T BE PROSECUTED

Computer fraud - the perfect crime.

62 ANAGRAM CRACKER

Program listing to help you solve crosswords.

70 TOMMY'S TIPS

Your programming problems solved here.

77 DOCTORS - CAN COMPUTERS EASE THE STRAIN?

Micros in your doctor's surgery.

89 REX MALIK'S OFFICIAL COMPUTER JOKE BOOK

The best and the worst.

EDITORIAL

Publisher Julian Allason
Editor Richard Pawson
Art Editor Denis Appleby
Technical Editor Chris Preston
Special Correspondents Terry Hope
Dennis Jarrett Mike Gross-Niklaus
Lindsay Doyle David Eldridge
John Gowans Bob Chappell
Production Manager Wendy Cheetham
Official Mouthpiece: Miss L. Lovelace
Editorial Address: P.O. Box 2
Goring, Reading, England RG8 9LN
Telephone: 049162 798
Telex 444423 Attention Printout

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Annual Rates (12 issues)
UK £11.40 Europe £17.40
USA airspeeded \$29 Eire £15.60
Rest of World surface £16.50
Rest of World airmail £30
Subscription Address:
Stuart House, Perrymount Road,
Haywards Heath, West Sussex,
Permit to mail second class postage at
New York, NY. USPS#598-610
US Mailing Agent: Expeditors of the
Printed Word Ltd, 527 Madison Avenue
Suite 1217, New York, NY 10022, USA.

ADVERTISING

Advertising Manager Jonathan Horne
Advertisement Executive: Karen Chambers
Advertising Address Printout Adver-
tising Office, North Warnborough,
Basingstoke RG25 1PB.
Telephone Odiham (025671) 2724
Telex 444423 Attention Printout

Printed in England

ISSN 0 261-4499

CP/M® for the PET

Softbox

Simply by plugging the SMALL SYSTEMS SOFT BOX into the PET IEEE port and loading the CP/M disk, the PET will run under the world's most popular disk operating system, CP/M (tm). No internal connections or modifications to the PET are required.

Application packages designed to work with specific terminals (e.g. Lear Siegler ADM3A, Televideo 912 or Hazeltine 1500) will need no modifications to work with the PET screen, as the SMALL SYSTEMS SOFT BOX allows the PET screen to emulate any of these devices.

Specifications

- Full 60k byte RAM
- CP/M version 2.2
- Z80 CPU running at 4MHz with no wait states
- Dimensions: 25cm x 9cm x 16cm
- Operates with any series 2000, 3000, 4000, or 8000 PET
- Supports up to 8 Commodore disk drives in any mix of 3040, 4040, or 8050 drive types.
- Diskette containing CP/M system with utilities, and full documentation included in price. Please specify 3040, 4040 or 8050 disk format when ordering.
- Optional RS232 serial interface (with user definable baud rates) for use with a terminal or printer.
- Optional Corvus hard diskdrive interface.

SoftBox prices

SoftBox	£550
SoftBox with RS232 interface	£595
SoftBox with hard disk interface for Corvus drive	£615
SoftBox with RS232 and hard disk interface options	£660
SoftBox Manual	£5

Hard Disks...

Corvus Drives

Well proven systems with nationwide support and maintenance.

- 5,10, 20MB capacity
- Up to 4 drives can be daisy chained
- Backup onto standard video cassette using the Mirror unit
- Up to 64 users with the Constellation multiplexer unit.

5MB Corvus drive	£2295
10MB	£3595
20MB	£4495
Mirror back up unit	£495
Constellation	£495

Stand alone capability

The SoftBox, in conjunction with a standard VDU, will operate as a stand alone CP/M system with built in IEEE-488 interface operating with 5 MByte floppy storage or upto 80 MBytes of hard disk storage.

CP/M Software

LANGUAGES

ALGOL-60 (Research Machines) £130/£20
ALGOL is a powerful block structured language featuring economical run-time dynamic allocation of memory. The compiler is very compact (24k) and supports almost all Algol 60 report features.

C COMPILER (BD Software) £80/£15
This compiler supports most major features of the language including structure, arrays, pointers and recursive function evaluation. The compiler produces compact, relocatable 8080 code for use with the linker and library supplied.

C BASIC Compiler Systems £75/£12
This is a non-interactive BASIC used by many business application programs. It supports full file control chaining formatted output and random disk file access, 14-digit arithmetic WHILE/WEND and optional line numbering.

C COMPILER (Whitesmith's) £455/£25
This compiler conforms to the full UNIX version 7 implementation of the C language, which has more facilities than Pascal or BASIC and produces faster code.

S-BASIC £195/£20
A structured BASIC compiler generating 8080 native code, combining structured programming and the speed of machine code while maintaining the convenience of BASIC.

BASIC-80 (Microsoft) £175/NA
This is Microsoft Extended BASIC interpreter, version 5. It is a powerful, ANSI compatible disk BASIC with many features not found in PET BASIC, such as WHILE/WEND, chaining, variable length file records, double precision floating point, PRINT USING facility, error trapping, hexadecimal numbers and more.

BASIC COMPILER (Microsoft) £205/NA
This compiler is language compatible with the Microsoft version 5 interpreter but generates 8080/Z80 machine code, so that program execution is typically 3 to 10 times faster.

COBOL-80 (Microsoft) £375/£20
An ANSI '74 COBOL compiler producing relocatable modules compatible with FORTRAN-80 or MACRO-80 output. COBOL-80 has a complete ISAM facility and interactive screen handling.

CIS-COBOL (Microfocus) £425/£30
An ANSI '74 standard COBOL compiler fully validated by U.S. Navy tests to ANSI level 1. The compiler also supports many features of level 2 including dynamic loading of COBOL modules and a full indexed Sequential (ISAM) file.

FORTRAN-80 (Microsoft) £230/£20
The popular science and engineering language, complying with the ANSI '66 standard (except for the Complex data type), with enhancements such as mixed mode arithmetic.

PASCAL/MT + £375/£20
A Pascal compiler meeting the ISO standard, with many enhancements including full string handling capability and random access files.

PASCAL/M £220/£15
This compiler produces p-code and is an extended implementation of standard Pascal, with long (32-bit) integers, a SEGMENT procedure type (for overlays) and an added string data type.

PASCAL/MT £160/£20
This is a subset of standard Pascal, which generates ROMable 8080 machine code and supports interrupt procedures, CP/M file input/output, and assembly language subroutines.

PASCAL/Z (Ithaca Intersystems) £225/£20
A compiler producing ROMable, re-entrants Z80 micro-code highly optimised for speed, supporting variant records strings CP/M file input/output, and assembly language subroutines.

PRO PASCAL £190/NA
This Pascal Compiler implements the full proposed standard with improvement extensions such as random access files, strings and program segmentation. Pro Pascal is designed specifically for the Z80 and produces relocatable machine code which is very fast and compact. A linker and cross-reference generator are provided, and Pro Pascal object code may be used in READ only memory.

muLISP £110/£15
LISP is an interactive programming language widely used for artificial intelligence applications.

PL/I-80 (Digital Research) £325/NA
A general purpose application programming language giving mainframe capability for developing large-scale structured programs in a microcomputer environment.

TINY C TWO £130/£30
A compiler written in TINY C. The source code is included on disk.

WORD PROCESSING

WORDSTAR (MicroPro) £255/£35
A powerful screen-oriented word processor designed for non-technical personnel. Text formatting is performed on the screen, so that what you see is what your print-out will look like. WORDSTAR'S advanced facilities include justification, pagination, underscores, boldface, subscript and superscript, block movement of text.

WORDINDEX (MIDAS) £150/NA
A program to assist WORDSTAR users by generating a table of contents and index from a WORDSTAR document.

MAILMERGE (MicroPro) £80/£15
MAILMERGE is an add-on utility for WORDSTAR users allowing the production of personalized form letters or other documents from a mailing list made using DATASTAR or NAD. Requires WORDSTAR.

MICROSPELL £165/NA
This is a spelling help program which scans through a document file stopping at each dubious word, offering correctly spelt alternatives and allowing you to correct the word with a keystroke.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

BSTAM £115/NA
This telecommunications utility permits any type of CP/M file to be transferred to or from another computer also equipped with BSTAM. Transmission occurs at full speed with CRC error checking and automatic error recovery.

BSTMS £115/NA
An intelligent terminal program permitting communication with a mainframe computer.

NUMERIC PROBLEM SOLVING TOOLS

T/MAKER II £185/£15
An advanced utility for preparing management reports with tabular data, combining visual calculator with a full screen editor.

MICRO MODELLER £595/NA
The number one Financial Modelling and forecasting program.

ANALYST (Structured Systems Group) £130/£15
A customised data entry and reporting system in which the user specifies up to 75 data items per record, and can use interactive data entry, retrieval and update facilities to make information management easy.

muSIMP/muMATH £140/NA
A package of programs including muSIMP, a high level programming language for symbolic and semi-numeric processing, and muMATH, an interactive symbolic mathematics system written in muSIMP.

STATPAK £260/£20
A professional statistics and probability package which can rapidly handle large files of data.

DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

dBASE II £385.00
An interactive relational database management package with full screen formatting and its own fully structured high level command language. Interactive data entry and Validation with WordStar-like commands. Allows you to develop application packages in days rather than months.

MDBS £675/£30
Micro Data Base System is a full network data base with all the features of HDBS, with fixed or variable record length, read/write protection at the ITEM, RECORD, SET and FILE levels.

LANGUAGE APPLICATION TOOLS

FORMS 2 for CIS Cobol £120/NA

FABS £115/£15
FABS gives you rapid access to large data files by using balanced tree structures containing up to 65,000 records. Instructions are included for use with CBASIC2, S-BASIC, BASIC-80, BASIC compiler, PL/I-80, Pascal/MT + and FORTRAN-80.

M/SORT FOR COBOL-80 £130/£12
A record sorting utility for COBOL-80 conforming fully to the ANSI '74 level 2 sort/merge standard (except for alphabet name collating sequence).

SYSTEM TOOLS

CROSS ASSEMBLER £95/£10
XASM 05, 09, 18, 0 48, F8, 65, COPS 400 and 51
Cross assemblers for the Motorola 6505, Motorola 6809, RCA 1802, Intel 8048, Motorola 6800, Fairchild F8, MOS Technology 6502, National Semiconductor 400 and Intel 8051 families.

BASIC 48 - Enhanced Basic Compiler £195/£10
Produces highly optimized assembly source for 8048 family. Includes XASM48.



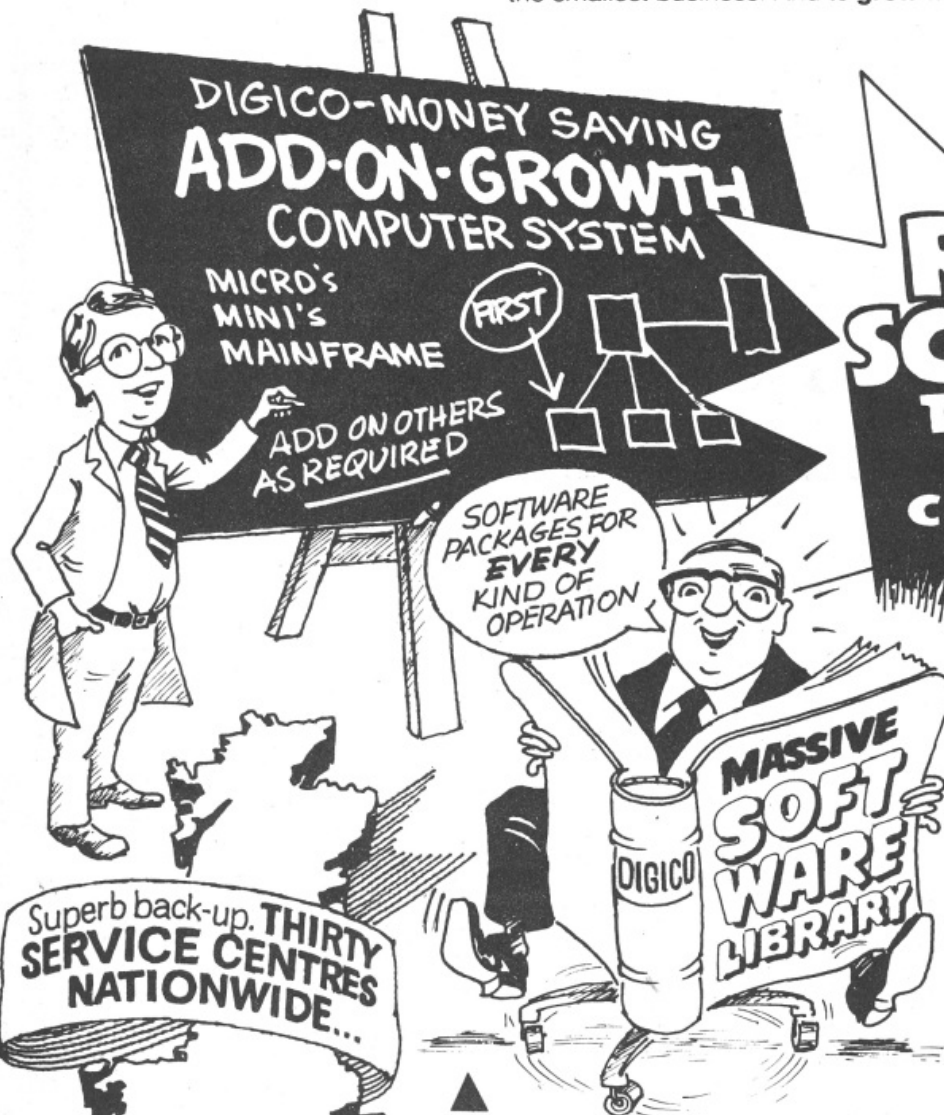
small systems engineering limited

2-4 Canfield Place London-NW6 3BT Telephone 01-328 7145/6 Telex 264538

YOUR GUIDE TO DIGICO

BRITAIN'S LEADING BUSINESS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGISTS ?

▼ DIGICO. A totally modern computer system designed to bring the cost of up-to-date information technology within the reach of the smallest business. And to **grow** with them.



RENTAL SCHEMES TO SAVE YOUR CAPITAL

▲ e.g. A complete word processor for £41 per week. Rental on even the smallest business system includes maintenance.

Superb back-up. **THIRTY SERVICE CENTRES NATIONWIDE...**

... for expert advice and help. And you're never far from a DIGICO engineer.

Legal, Accounting
Word Processing
Transport, Medical,
Production Control
Stock Control, Payroll
Telecommunications
Dentistry, Printing

Builders Merchants
Incomplete records
Publishing, Holidays
Bookshops, Betting
Warehousing, Mailings
Maintenance, Teaching
Research.

DESIGNED IN BRITAIN

15
years of
British
Technology
at work

DIGICO have been designing, manufacturing and installing computer systems since 1966.

7-YEAR

PLUS

MINIMUM INTERRUPTION PLAN.
If your micro breaks down, we'll swap it over to keep you going.

GUARANTEE

Your computer has a SEVEN year guarantee of maintenance provided there is a maintenance contract continuously from new.

**RING NOW
FIND OUT HOW
DIGICO CAN
HELP YOU!**

**VERY
start / small
and grow
large with
digico**



Full information (no obligation) from

DIGICO COMPUTERS

46 BROADWAY LETCHWORTH, HERTS.

Tel: LETCHWORTH 78172

32 YORK RD, LEEDS. Tel: LEEDS 486688

Sumlock

Manchester

microcomputer world



SHARP

First and foremost

MZ 80 FD twin disk unit c.w. manual, interface card, cables etc.

MZ 80 P3 80 column printer

MZ 80 I/O expansion interface

MZ 80 T20C machine language tape and manual

MZ 80 TU assembler tapes and manual

MZ 8 T70AE FDOS and assembler

MZ 8 T70BE Basic compiler

MZ 8 T40E Pascal tape and manual

QUANTOM hi resolution board - fitted

new Software secrets (MZ80K)

new BASIC PLUS contains -

list pause, repeat key, link, single keystroke, entry of common basic commands, NPAD numeric keypad with keypad labels, error routine - highlights error

GREEN SCREEN

DUST COVER (SHARP logo)

Inc. VAT)
£736.00

£419.75

110.40

20.70

41.40

86.25

51.75

51.75

172.50

5.95

13.80

4.95

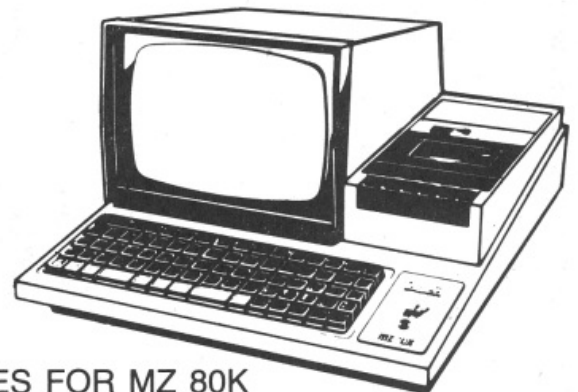
7.48

MZ-80K

SHARP

with 48Kbytes of memory
basic tape and programming
manual

only **£395.00** INC. VAT*



RANGE OF GAMES CASSETTES FOR MZ 80K

TWO YEAR WARRANTY ON SHARP HARDWARE parts and labour

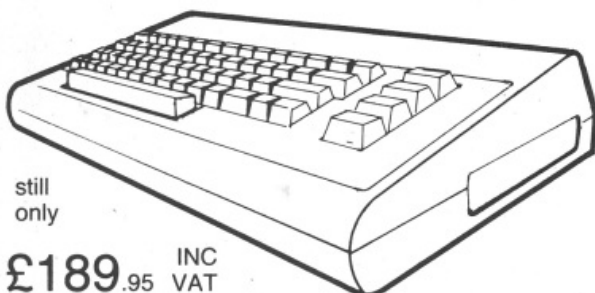
Computer books now in stock

*** FREE GREEN SCREEN!**

THE HOME COMPUTER

by commodore

VIC-20



still
only

£189.95 INC
VAT

commodore

	(inc. VAT)
VIC 1530	cassette deck 44.95
VIC 1515	printer 230.00
VIC 1540	single floppy drive 396.00
VIC 1210	3K ram cartridge 29.95
VIC 1110	8K ram cartridge 44.95
VIC 1111	16K ram cartridge 74.95
VIC 2501	introduction to basic (1) 13.95
VIC 1906	Alien ROM game 19.95
VIC 1907	Super Lander ROM game 19.95
VIC 1904	Super Slot ROM game 19.95

andiegenic stockist

COMPLETE LIST OF HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE AVAILABLE BY REQUEST

All items are ex stock. Telephone/mail order
despatched within 24 hours. Carriage free U.K. mainland



Sumlock Manchester
Dept MC1
Royal London House
198 Deansgate
Manchester
M3 3NE

OPEN MONDAY TO SATURDAY
PARKING WATSON ST. N.C.P.

keep up to date
join our free mailing list

061 834 4233

THE VIC NEEDS VIC REVEALED

**THE DEFINITIVE REFERENCE
BOOK ON THE VIC SYSTEM
FROM NICK HAMPSHIRE**

Now available. Price £10.00 from Commodore dealers and bookshops. Nick Hampshire Publications, P.O. Box 13, Lysander Road, Yeovil, Somerset.

low cost high quality interfaces

3D

**We are specialist suppliers of
CBM PET and HP 85
compatible interfaces.**

**We also supply complete systems
for industrial and laboratory
monitoring and control.**

Custom design undertaken.

Callers welcome for demonstration.



Digital Design and Development

18/19 Warren Street London W1P 5DB Tel: 01 387 7388

IEEE-488 compatible systems . . .

- | | |
|--|------|
| ● 8 channel 12-bit A/D convertor | £600 |
| ● 8 channel 12 bit D/A convertor | £695 |
| ● 16 channel 12-bit A/D convertor
with software programmable
amplifier | £850 |
| ● 16 channel 8-bit A/D convertor | £300 |
| ● 8 channel 8-bit D/A convertor | £350 |
| ● X-Y analog plotter interface | £200 |
| ● digital data input unit, 64 bits | £400 |
| ● digital data output unit, 64 bits | £350 |
| ● 16 channel relay control unit | £350 |

All the above units are boxed complete with
IEEE-488 address internally selectable, integral
power supply, switch, fuse, indicators etc
Illustrative BASIC software supplied

- | | |
|---|------|
| ● user port convertor A/D plus D/A | £200 |
| ● fast data acquisition system
40,000 readings per sec.
4 A/D + 4 D/A | £950 |

All prices EX-VAT.



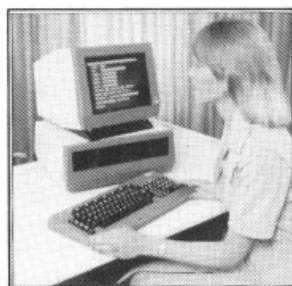
You can tell a SIRIUS man when you see one



The ACT Sirius I is a revolutionary concept in personal computing for business, bringing a whole new meaning to the term 'Price/Performance'. It offers users the 16-bit performance of a traditional minicomputer at a really exciting personal computer price. And it's backed by the strength and resources of ACT, a major public company which is the UK's largest distributor of personal computer software and a leader in small business systems. The ACT Sirius I is the Number One personal computer for your business.

ACT
Sirius 1
SEEING
IS BELIEVING

See Prestel 31141145
For further details and
demonstration contact;



Astral & Chambers

12 SAYESBURY ROAD, SAWBRIDGEWORTH,
HERTFORDSHIRE Telephone (0279) 724081

NAME _____

COMPANY _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____

Pt1

Beelines give your

VIC

a 40 column display with 32K of extra RAM as well!



12 months
parts and
labour
guarantee.

PRICE:

Nett	VAT	TOTAL
£220.00	£33.00	£253.00

The Colour Writer VIC Expansion gives you the most cost effective way of expanding your VIC to 35K AND we give you the added bonus of a 40 Column display free of charge. Now you can have the luxury of a 32K Pet AND Colour to enhance your programs. The Colour screen consists of 960 characters in a 40 column by 24 row layout (to Viewdata standard) with the 25th line for status information. The programmable features include 7 foreground and background colours, flashing, double height characters, block graphics and any combination you care to name; and not content with a 35K VIC, we give you an extra motherboard slot for further expansion.



BEELINES (Bolton) LTD
FREEPOST (No stamp required)
Bolton BL3 6YZ
Telephone (0204) 382741 & 384599

24 hour answer phone: 0204 385299
Reg. office: 124 Newport St., Bolton BL3 6AB.
Dealer enquiries welcome.

Please send me:

Qty.	Item	Price
	Beelines VIC 35K + 40 Column Expansion Unit @ £220 + £33 VAT	

I enclose cheque/P.O. ☐

OR Please debit my:

Access 5224 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Barclaycard 4929 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Expiry Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

Code _____

Tel. (day) _____

Official orders welcome – we will ship to approved account holders on receipt of firm order.

Delivery free within mainland UK

Access and Barclaycard welcome.

Telephone answering machine for 24hr/7 day

credit card orders 0204 385299

Freepost: Beelines, FREEPOST, Bolton BL3 6YZ

MP.5.82.



With the Home Computer from Texas Instruments, you can converse in the five major languages: BASIC, PASCAL, TI-LOGO, ASSEMBLER and it speaks English!



When you compare the TI-99/4A Home Computer to its competition, you'll find it is a truly remarkable machine. For a start, it enables you to use the most important programming languages. Something that is difficult to find on other comparable computers. What's more, it has a large 16 K Byte RAM memory capacity, expandable to 48 K Byte. With the addition of certain peripherals and a Solid State Software[®] Module a total combined RAM/ROM capacity of 110 K Bytes is available. The TI-99/4A Home Computer plugs into an ordinary TV set and can be expanded into a complete computing system with the addition of peripherals such as two ordinary domestic cassette recorders, remote control units, disk memory drives, speech synthesiser, and thermal printer. Via an RS 232 interface option, other peripherals such as communication modems, impact printers and



plotters can be attached. With its high resolution graphics with 32 characters over 24 lines in 16 colours (256 x 192 dots), three tones in five octaves plus noise, and BASIC as standard equipment and options such as other programming languages - UCSD-PASCAL, TI-LOGO and ASSEMBLER - and speech synthesis, you'll find that the TI-99/4A Home Computer more than compares with competition. Especially when the starting price is £340 or less. When you want to solve problems there are over 600 software programs available worldwide - including more than 40 on easy-to-use Solid State Software[®] Modules.

After all, from the inventors of the micro-processor, integrated circuit and microcomputer, it's only natural to expect high technology at a realistic price.

The TI-99/4A Home Computer: another way we're helping you do better.



Enjoy a new world of learning.

TEXAS INSTRUMENTS
LIMITED

TEXAS INSTRUMENTS HOME COMPUTER STOCKISTS

ABERDEEN Dixons **ALTRINCHAM** Boots **ASHFORD** Rumbelows **BARNET** Rumbelows **BASILDON** Rumbelows **BASINGSTOKE** Boots **BATH** Wildings, Boots **BEDFORD** Carlow Radio, Rumbelows, Boots, Comserve **BILLERICAY** Rumbelows **BIRKENHEAD** Dixons **BIRMINGHAM** Dixons, Hewards Home Stores, Boots **BLACKPOOL** Boots **BLETCHLEY** Rumbelows **BOLTON** Wildings **BOREHAMWOOD** Rumbelows **BRADFORD** Ackroyd Typewriters **BRAINTREE** Rumbelows **BRENTWOOD** Rumbelows **BRIGHTON** Garner, Boots **BRISTOL** Dixons, Wildings **BROMLEY** Rumbelows, Boots, Wildings **BROMYARD** Acoutape Sound **CAMBRIDGE** Rumbelows, Dixons, Wildings, Heffers **CANTERBURY** Rumbelows, Dixons **CARDIFF** Boots, Dixons, Computer Business Systems **CARLISLE** Dixons **CHELMSFORD** Dixons, Rumbelows **CHESTER** Boots **CHINGFORD** Rumbelows **COLCHESTER** Wildings, Rumbelows **CORBY** Computer Supermarket **CROYDON** Wildings, Boots, Dixons, Ailders **DARTFORD** Rumbelows **DERBY** Datron Microcentre, Boots **DORRIDGE** Taylor Wilson **DUNSTABLE** Rumbelows **EASTBOURNE** Rumbelows **EDINBURGH** Robox, Esco, Texas Instruments, Dixons, B.E.M. **ENFIELD** Rumbelows **EXETER** Peter Scott, Boots, Dixons **GLASGOW** Boots, Esco, Robox, Dixons **GLOUCESTER** Wildings **GRAVESEND** Wildings **GT. YARMOUTH** Rumbelows **HANLEY** Boots **HARLOW** Rumbelows **HATFIELD** Rumbelows **HEMEL HEMPSTEAD** Rumbelows, Dixons **HIGH WYCOMBE** Wildings **HITCHIN** Rumbelows **HODDESDON** Rumbelows **HULL** Radius Computers, Boots, Dixons, Peter Tutty **ILFORD** Boots **IPSWICH** Wildings, Rumbelows **KINGSTON** Wildings, Dixons **LEEDS** Wildings, Dixons, Boots **LEICESTER** Dixons, Boots **LEIGHTON BUZZARD** Computopia **LETCHWORTH** Rumbelows **LINCOLN** Dixons **LIVERPOOL** Dixons, B.E.C. Computerworld **LONDON: Balham** Argos **Bow** Rumbelows **Brent Cross** Dixons, Boots **Camden Town** Rumbelows **City Road** Sumlock Bondain **Clerkenwell** Star Business Machines **Curtain Road** Eurocalc **Ealing** Adda Computers **EC1** Argos **Edmonton** Rumbelows **Finchley Road** Star Business Machines **Goodge Street** Star Business Machines **Hackney** Rumbelows **Hammersmith** Dixons **Holborn** Wildings, Dixons **Hornchurch** Wildings **Hounslow** Boots **Knightsbridge** Video Palace, Harrods **Marble Arch** Star Business Machines **Moorfield** Dixons **Moorgate** Star Business Machines **New Bond Street** Dixons **NW1** Mountandene **Oxford Street** Selfridges, H.M.V. Dixons **Regent Street** Star Business Machines **Tottenham Court Road** Landau, Eurocalc **Victoria Street** Army & Navy **Wood Green** Boots, Rumbelows **Woolwich** Wildings **Loughton** Rumbelows **LUTON** Dixons, Rumbelows, Wildings **MAIDSTONE** Dixons, Boots, Rumbelows, Wildings **MALDON** Rumbelows **MANCHESTER** Orbit, Wildings, Boots, Dixons **MIDDLESBROUGH** Boots, Dixons **MILTON KEYNES** Rumbelows, Dixons **NEWBURY** Dixons **NEWCASTLE** Boots, Dixons **NORTHAMPTON** Dixons **NORWICH** Dixons, Rumbelows **NOTTINGHAM** Bestmoor, Dixons, Boots **ORPINGTON** Rumbelows **OXFORD** Science Studio **PETERBOROUGH** Boots **PLYMOUTH** J.A.D., Dixons **PORTSMOUTH** Boots, Dixons **POTTERS BAR** Rumbelows **PRESTON** Dixons **RAMSGATE** Dixons **RAYLEIGH** Rumbelows **READING** Dixons **ROMFORD** Wildings, Rumbelows, Dixons **RUSHDEN** Computer Contact **SANDY** Electron Systems **SHEFFIELD** Datron Microcentre, Dixons **SITTINGBOURNE** Rumbelows **SLOUGH** Boots, Wildings, Texas Instruments **SOUTHAMPTON** Dixons, The Maths Box **SOUTHEND** Rumbelows, Wildings, Dixons **ST. ALBANS** Rumbelows **STEVENAGE** Dixons, Rumbelows **STRATFORD** Rumbelows **SUDBURY** Rumbelows **SUTTON** Wildings **SWANSEA** Dixons **SWINDON** Wildings **TONBRIDGE** Rumbelows **WALTHAM CROSS** Rumbelows, Wildings **WALTHAMSTOW** Rumbelows, Wildings **WARE** Rumbelows **WARRINGTON** Boots **WATFORD** Computer Plus, Wildings, Computer Centre, **WELWYN GARDEN CITY** Rumbelows **WETHERBY** Bits & Pieces **WIMBLEDON** Wildings **WOLVERHAMPTON** Dixons **WOODFORD** Rumbelows **WOOLWICH** Rumbelows

Taylor Wilson systems

Taylor-Wilson Systems Limited

Station Road, Dorridge, Solihull, West Midlands B93 8HQ

Telephone (05645) 6192

Telex 336513



The Computer Centre, Watford, Limited

150 High Street, Watford, Herts. Telephone: Watford 44057/40601

Directors: G. Bor R. Bor M. Weatherill.

Reg. No. 1554848 Reg. Office: 25 Manchester Square, London. W1M 6HD

**adda
home computers**

Adda Home Computers Ltd.

154 Victoria Road

Acton London W3 6UL

Tel: 01-992 9904

COMPUTER PLUS

47 Queens Road, Watford, Herts. WD1 2LH Telephone: Watford (0923) 33927

Partners: J. Wheeler E. Wheeler

V.A.T. No. 366 9072 22

COMPUTER SUPERMARKET

Computer Supermarket Ltd

3rd Floor Douglas House

Queen's Square Corby

Northamptonshire

Telephone (05366) 62571

SALE ELECTRONIC GAMES



NOW £40 OFF

ATARI T.V. GAME

THE GAME WITH 50 CARTRIDGES

R.R.P. £129.95 (inc. VAT)

OUR PRICE
£78.22 + VAT

(= £89.95 inc. VAT)

The Atari is supplied with a free mains adaptor, a pair of paddles, a pair of joysticks and a combat cartridge and is the most popular television game on the market and has a range of over 40 different cartridges. In addition to the standard Atari range we also now stock the new Activision cartridges which are currently on special offer reduced from £18.95 to **£16.95 inc. VAT**

ATARI CARTRIDGES

20% OFF R.R.P.

Atari Soccer £29.95

NOW £23.95

Activision Dragster £18.95

NOW £14.95

Activision Boxing £18.95

NOW £14.95

ATARI OWNERS CLUB — Why not join our **FREE** Silica Atari Owners Club and receive our bi-monthly newsletter with special offers and details of the latest new cartridge releases. Telephone us with your name and address and we will add your name to our computer mailing list.

MATTEL INTELLIVISION

THE ULTIMATE T.V. GAME

R.R.P. £229.95 (inc. VAT)

OUR PRICE
£156.48 + VAT

(£179.95 inc. VAT)

6 NEW CARTRIDGES JUST RELEASED:
ASTROSMASH * SNAFU * BOWLING
SPACE ARMADA * BOXING
TRIPLE ACTION

All 19 current cartridges + the six new ones above now retail at £19.95 — Silica special offer price **£17.95 inc VAT**



The Mattel Intellivision is the most advanced T.V. game in the world with a range of over 25 different cartridges all at our special offer price of £17.95. This game uses a 16-bit microprocessor giving 16 colours and three-part harmony sound. The picture quality is incredible with 3D effects and realistic animation. An add on keyboard will be available in the Spring 1982 to convert the Mattel into a full home computer with 16K RAM which will be fully expandable and programmable in Microsoft Basic. Other accessories will be added later in the year. The normal price of the Intellivision + free soccer cartridge is £229.95 but our special offer price is £179.95 inc. VAT saving you £50.00.

MATTEL OWNERS CLUB — Why not join our Mattel Owners Club and receive our regular newsletters containing details of all the latest cartridge releases. Telephone us with your name and addresses and we will add your name to our computer mailing list.

FREE 16 PAGE CARTRIDGE CATALOGUE — If you are interested in owning a Mattel, we now have available a 16 page catalogue describing the latest six cartridges to be released, as well as a new Mattel colour leaflet with brief descriptions of all 25 cartridges. Telephone us for further details.

T.V. GAME CARTRIDGES

We specialise in the whole range of T.V. games and sell cartridges for the following games: **ATARI * MATTEL * ACETRONIC * PHILIPS * DATABASE * ROWTRON * INTERTON * TELENG**. Let us know if you own any of these games and we will let you have details of the range of cartridges available.

Attention INTERTON & ACETRONIC owners we have over 75 assorted used cartridges in stock all with 1 year guarantee — **SPECIAL OFFER £8.95 each**

We also have a number of secondhand games and cartridges.



SPECIAL REDUCTIONS

ELECTRONIC CHESS

Liquid crystal battery chess computer with 100-200 hrs battery life and two levels of play. Comes with separate chess board and pieces.

NOW £5 OFF

R.R.P. £24.95

SALE PRICE

£19.95

(inc. VAT)

GRADUATE CHESS

A de luxe version of the electronic chess set with integral chess board. The ideal portable chess set — see illustration.

NOW

£29.95

INC VAT

FIDELITY MINI-SENSORY CHESS COMPUTER

The very first chess computer of its price to offer a portable computer with integral sensory board. Battery (6-8 hrs) or mains operated. This is a modular game and additional plug-in modules are planned for 1982 for advanced chess, popular openings, greatest master games, draughts and reversi.

MINI-SENSORY COMPUTER WITH STANDARD CHESS MODULE WAS £54.50 **NOW £49.95 INC VAT**

Silica Shop are one of the country's leading specialists in Chess Computers and now stock a range of more than 20 Chess Computers, including Challenger 7/10/voice, Sensory 8 and Sensory Voice, Diplomat, System 3, Morphy, Great Game Machine, Voice Champion, and the new Scissors Mark V.



LESS THAN 1/2 PRICE

COLOUR CARTRIDGE T.V. GAME

Semi-programmable T.V. game
4 cartridges
+ mains transformer
NOW £43.50 OFF
R.S.P. £75
SALE PRICE £29.50 inc VAT



SCOOP PURCHASE NOW 1/2 PRICE

BACKGAMMON COMPUTER

Silica stock a wide range of Backgammon computers from £28.95 upwards. Special offers now available on Quantummate. Was £99.95

NOW £48.95 inc VAT

CALL JOTTER — THE AFFORDABLE ANSWER

The Post Office certified telephone answering machine



1/2 THE PRICE OF COMPARABLE MACHINES

"Sorry darling, I will be late home — Love John"

The Call Jotter 1 brings the affordable answer at the amazing price of £69 (or £99 for the Call Jotter 2 with built-in remote recall facilities). These amazing telephone answering machines are Post Office certified and guaranteed for one year. They make a thoughtful gift for home or business use.

NOW £69.00 inc VAT



NOW £75 OFF

RADOFIN TELETEXT

Plug the adaptor into the aerial socket of your colour TV and receive the CELESTIAL and ORACLE television information services

ADD-ON ADAPTOR

WAS £199 inc. VAT
SALE PRICE £124 inc VAT

THIS NEW MODEL INCORPORATES
"Double height" character facility "True PAL Colour" Menus latest BBC & IBA broadcast specifications "Push button" channel change "Unnecessary" to remove the unit to watch normal TV programmes "Gold plated" circuit board for reliability

FOR FREE BROCHURES — TEL: 01-301 1111



For free illustrated brochure and reviews on our range of electronic games, please telephone 01 301 1111. Free delivery service available. To order by telephone please quote your name, address and ACCESS: BARCLAYCARD number, and leave the rest to us. Post and packing Free of Charge. Express 48 hour delivery service available.

CALLERS WELCOME — Demonstrations daily at our Sidcup shop, open from 9am-6pm. Monday-Saturday (Early Closing Thursday 5pm). Late Opening Friday 6pm.
* **2 YEAR GUARANTEE** — All goods are covered by a full year's guarantee and many are further covered by our exclusive Silica Shop 2 year Guarantee.
* **MONEY BACK UNDERTAKING** — If you are unsatisfied with your purchase and return it within 7 days we will give you a full refund.
* **AFTER SALES SERVICE** — Available on all machines out of guarantee.
* **COMPETITIVE PRICES** — We are never knowingly undersold.
* **HELPFUL ADVICE** — Available on the suitability of each machine.
* **CREDIT FACILITIES** — Full credit facilities available over 12, 24 or 36 months at competitive rates of interest.
* **PART EXCHANGE SCHEME** — available on second hand machines.
* **CREDIT CARDS WELCOME** — Access: Barclaycard, Drivers Club, American Express.

SILICA SHOP LIMITED Dept. MCP 0382
1-4 The Mews, Hatherley Road, Sidcup, Kent DA14 4DX
Telephone: 01-301 1111 or 01-309 1111





DOES YOUR PET OBEY THESE COMMANDS?

AUTO · DELETE · RENUMBER · APPEND · DUMP · FIND · STEP · OFF · HELP · TRACE

The Toolkit is a set of super aids designed to ease the task of writing and debugging programs on the PET.

It is a completely self-contained chip that comes fully assembled, requiring no special tools to install, in fact, on most models you can plug it into a socket in a matter of seconds.

In operation, the Toolkit requires no tape-loading or extra RAM.

The logo displayed when you switch on your PET indicates the model of Toolkit required.

LOGO	TOOLKIT
COMMODORE BASIC	TK-80
*** COMMODORE BASIC ***	TK-160
COMMODORE BASIC 4.0	TK-4.0



The BASIC Programmer's Toolkit is a trademark of Palo Alto ICs, a division of Nestar Systems Inc.

**Toolkit prices start at only £29 + VAT.
Call your nearest Commodore dealer**

for the new low-price Toolkit.

Please note that the Toolkit is not available directly from Zynar.

How Toolkit makes your programming easier:

FIND locates and displays the Basic program lines that contain a specified string, variable or keyword. If you were to type FIND A\$, 100-500, your PET's screen would display all lines between line numbers 100 and 500 that contain A\$.

RENUMBER rennumbers the entire program currently in your PET. You can instantly change all line numbers and all references to those numbers. For instance, to start the line numbers with 500 instead of 100 just use Renumber 500.

HELP is used when your program stops due to an error. Type HELP, and the line on which the error occurs will be shown. The erroneous portion of the line will be indicated in reverse video on the screen.

ZYNAR
LEADERS IN SILICON TECHNOLOGY
AND COMPUTER SCIENCES

HOW TO BUY A PURC

Continuing our series of practical advice to first-time buyers, **Spencer Hall** looks at the purchase ledger. His conclusion: unless you spend at least four hours a week processing invoices, don't put this program on your shopping list.

Last month we looked at sales ledgers and discussed the main characteristics of a good sales ledger package. This month we shall be looking at the flip side – the Purchase Ledger.

The basic function of a purchase ledger is to control suppliers and provide an analysis of expenses for production of the final accounts. Tight control of a purchase ledger is not so important as a sales ledger as the onus of credit control is with the supplier and not with the customer. If you forget to pay someone then they will soon remind you – if you forget to invoice a customer, he may well 'forget' also!

Many small companies just keep a file of paid invoices and unpaid invoices, simply transferring the actual invoice from one file to another when it is paid after marking the invoice so that it isn't paid twice. This method saves the tedium of having to maintain a purchase ledger and so cuts down administration costs.

However, the limitations of this method become apparent when you start running into part deliveries or part payments of invoices, and control of unpaid invoices starts to deteriorate. It also makes the production of monthly accounts more time consuming as the unpaid invoices have to be analysed at the end of every accounting period.

Efficiency

So although small businesses may find computerisation of the sales ledger beneficial, the same gains in efficiency may not arise from the purchasing side of the operation. So don't go into a computer shop thinking "I'll have one of each please". If you currently

operate on a cash payments basis you may well do better to let sleeping dogs lie.

If you already maintain a full blown purchase ledger and the nature of your business prevents you from operating on a cash payments analysis basis, then read on....

A good Purchase Ledger program should provide several of the following features – the more you can tick off the better.

1. A list of all suppliers in alphabetical order.
2. List of suppliers in account number order.
3. Produce remittance advices by selective criteria.
4. Display/print a suppliers current account position.
5. Maintain open item account details.
6. Write out cheques ready for signature (careful on this one).
7. Disallow single entry journals.
8. Permit discounts for quick payment to be identified.
9. Produce an analysis of all payments for posting to the Trial Balance.
10. Produce age analysis of all unpaid invoices.
11. Permit down payments to suppliers.
12. Display/Print control account at any time.
13. Interface to the stock control program (if required).
14. Interface across to the nominal Ledger (if required).
15. Print out day book entries for batch and month to date on request.
16. List suppliers together with turnover figures for year to date.

17. Ability to move some of the narrative about on remittance advices.

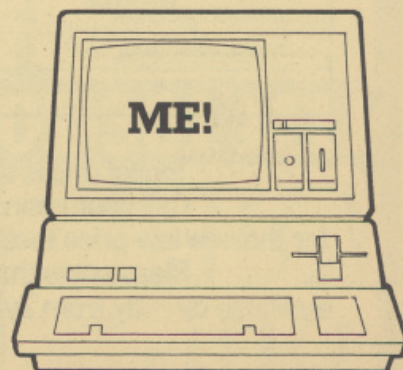
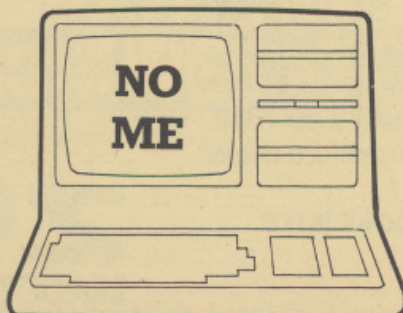
These are some of the main points to look for. Of course the program must be easy to use and each process should be well signposted to guide the user onto the next step. The maximum number of customers will vary according to the capacity of the disks and the computers' RAM. Can you install additional disk drives without program modifications? Can you have more than one screen accessing the same disk drive? These are more esoteric questions which won't concern the small business with 50 invoices per week.

At what sort of level should one consider using a computer to control the purchase ledger? If you spend more than about four to five hours a week just processing invoices and writing up the purchase day book and purchase ledger then you should look at the possibility of a purchase ledger program. Identify those areas which consume the most time. How useful would age analysis be if it was available to you?

Integrated costing

Of course, it may have occurred to you that the purchase ledger should be integrated into a costing system. This sounds like a really great idea in theory except that it gobbles up tons of disk space. It also means your production control and sales have to share the same database which leads to the problem of having the correct disk in the correct disk drive at the right time. Easy if you're a born juggler on an Apple disk drive. Guaranteed to lead to complete confusion if you're a normal fallible human being.

The only successful way in which you can thoroughly integrate a purchase ledger to a costing system to stock control to a sales ledger is – wait for it – Yes, you've guessed – a hard disk drive! That is why there are currently no fully integrated systems which can run on a microcomputer. That operation is still the exclusive preserve of the DEC's and Data Generals of this world.



PURCHASE LEDGER

The possibility of fraud can be guarded against by implementing the usual management controls such as presenting invoices to the cheque signature at the end of payment, or only entering the invoice onto the ledger when the goods have been received or the services duly authorised.

The most common frauds on a purchase ledger are fictitious suppliers (controlled by periodic reviews of all suppliers with turnover figures), duplicate invoices (checked by day book listing and authorisation of invoices). Other means of combatting fraud include crossing cheques A/C payee only so that the bank will only accept the cheque in the name of the payee's bank account. Also examine returned cheques on the back for any signs of endorsements.

When entering details of suppliers' invoices you should be able to allocate the invoice to more than just purchases and VAT. You should be able to allocate the charge to a variety of accounts as well as identify any discount available for prompt payment.

Disk space

If the program offers open item accounting then cash payments will have to be allocated against specific invoices. Is this achieved relatively painlessly?

You may find it useful to be able to review a suppliers account for the whole year. Usually lack of disk space does not permit this luxury although it can be very useful to be able to examine the movements on a suppliers account over the period of a year.

If you already have a computer then you may find the printer is not suitable for some of the printouts which the program will generate. The age analysis in particular may be more than 80 columns wide which presents certain problems to standard 80 column printers.

Should your business require additional information such as the number of tonnes of fertiliser purchased or other quantity control totals then you will have to enter the realm of bespoke software or have a standard pac-

kage amended.

You may wish to control back orders, i.e. those goods which have been ordered but have not yet been received from the supplier. Some programs may offer this facility but it starts eating into valuable disk capacity it is unlikely that you will find this degree of sophistication on a floppy disk based system.

So to sum up, a purchase ledger is designed to control suppliers and help a business make best use of its creditors as a source of finance. The onus of control lies more with the supplier than with the customer (for chasing up unpaid invoices) but you do need to know those invoices which offer a discount for prompt payment.

Unless you currently spend at least four hours a week processing invoices in one form or another there is little point in attempting to harness the micro chip to assist you. A micro computer system can only really offer the basic fundamentals of a purchase ledger. Due to lack of cheap permanent storage mediums (hard disks still have security problems) a fully integrated purchase ledger encompassing back orders, stock and production costing is at least two years away.

Cautionary tale

So much for Purchase Ledgers and their entourage. I would like to relate a story about the use of microcomputers in the rough, tough world of international business. The story concerns the tale of two British companies (who shall remain nameless to protect the guilty!) one of which has the ubiquitous PET, the other an £18,000 mini computer.

The company with the PET has a word processing program with a high quality printer. It has spent approximately £4,000 on hardware and software and frequently uses it to produce long reports which are subject to last minute revisions and amendments. The quality of printed material produced by the micro has produced extra profits in the region of £6,000 in 1982 alone on one project utilising just the word processing program.

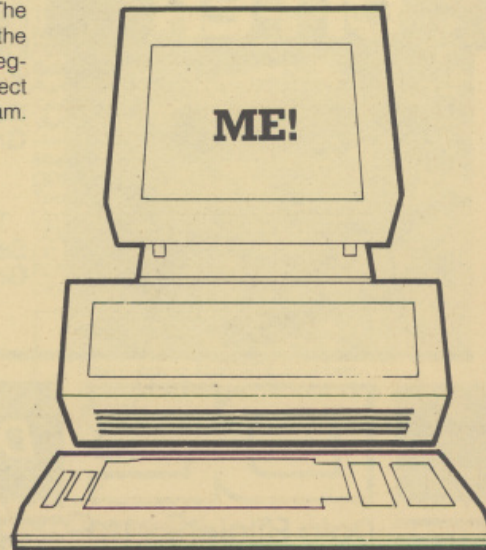
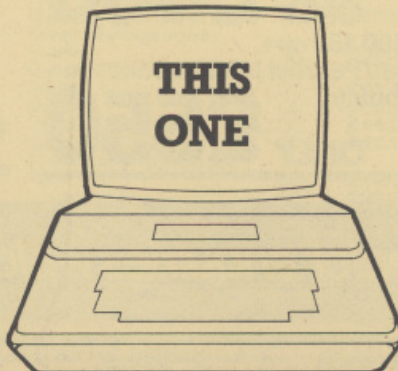
The machine is probably used for about 15 hours a week.

The other company has sales, purchase and payroll on the computer but nothing else. The final accounts were processed on a PET by an accountant in order to reduce the time required to process the final accounts from 8 hours to 1.5 hours. However, when senior management found out what the accountant had done, they were furious and forbade future use of the program and insisted that the accounts were prepared by conventional means. So the poor underpaid accountant had to copy out all the computer printouts in long hand, to fool the management that their request had been complied with. (I wonder why he is underpaid?)

One company is achieving a significant increase in its profitability and has taken on more employees. The other company has made a loss for the last 12 months and continues to do so. There are no prizes for guessing the correct answer.

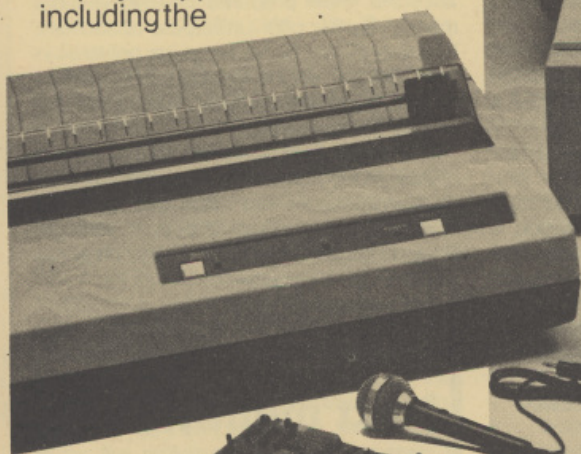
See you next month.

**Next month:
How to buy a
Nominal/General
Ledger**



For all your Micro needs and more...

Data Efficiency dealers offer printers from Centronics, Olivetti, Anadex and Integral Data (Paper Tiger) including the new Prism Colour Printer, monitors from Philips and Kaga (former manufacturers of BMC) with black/white, green, amber and full colour displays. Apple accessories including the



Mountain Hardware range and more – you'll find that a DE dealer has a lot more to offer.

Price is important, so is service, and with access to

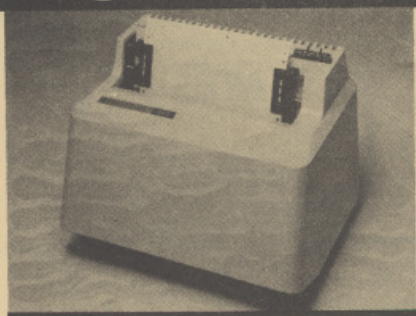


over £1 million worth of stock, your DE dealer will get you what you want, when you want – with prices to match.

Data Efficiency Ltd
Computer Division,
Finway Road,
Hemel Hempstead,
Hertfordshire, HP2 7PS

Tel: (0442) 40571/2
Telex: 825554 DATEFF G

SPECIAL OFFER



For a limited period whilst stocks remain we're offering Paper Tiger Printers at low, low prices.

T 445 92 cps.
Serial/Parallel Interface.
Graphics

ONLY **£450**

T 460 152 cps.
Serial/Parallel Interface.
Graphics.

ONLY **£550**

**Ring for
details of your
nearest
stockist
(0442) 40571/2**



DE
Data Efficiency Ltd

Dealer enquiries welcome

THE WEST END
ATARI PERSONAL COMPUTER
CENTRE



ATARI 400A COMPUTER

16K RAM, full features at an economic price.

£299.00



ATARI 800 COMPUTER

16K to 48K RAM, superb construction modular design, full stroke keyboard.

£599.00

ATARI 810 DISC DRIVE



88K data storage on a 5¼ inch floppy disk.

£345.00

ATARI 739 80 COLUMN PRINTER



Dot matrix printer with 6 typefaces plus graphics capability.

£550.00

ATARI 410 CASSETTE DECK



Digital track plus audio track for simultaneous commentary on some programmes.

£50.00

ATARI 822 THERMAL PRINTER



Bi-directional 40 column printer.

£265.00

We stock full range of accessories inc:- RS232 Interface Module, 16K RAM Expander Modules, Joysticks, Paddles, Cables etc.

All Prices include VAT.

LONDON'S LARGEST STOCKS OF ATARI SOFTWARE

We carry vast stocks of all available software suitable for the ATARI Personal Computers. Our staff will be pleased to assist you in selecting the computer programmes for your machine.

Educational								
Pilot	ROM	£49.50	Basketball	ROM	£24.50	Telelink 1	ROM	£14.95
Invite to program 1	CC	£11.95	Blackjack	CC	£8.95	Mortgage & Loan	CC	£11.95
Invite to program 2	CC	£16.95	Computer Chess	ROM	£24.50	Payroll	DISK	£95.00
Invite to program 3	CC	£18.50	Missile Command	ROM	£29.95	Sales Ledger	DISK	£149.95
Conversation French	CC	£32.50	Space Invaders	ROM	£24.50	Purchase Ledger	DISK	£149.95
Conversation German	CC	£32.50	Star Raiders	ROM	£29.95	Keyword	DISK	£95.00
Conversation Spanish	CC	£32.50	Super Breakout	ROM	£24.50	Visualc	DISK	£119.95
Conversation Italian	CC	£32.50	Humpty Dumpty & Jack and Jill	CC	£19.95	Home Financial Management	CC	p.o.a.
Music Composer	ROM	£32.50	Hickory Dickory Dock & Bea, Bea Black Sheep	CC	£19.95	Manuals		
Touch typing	CC	£14.95	British Heritage Jigsaw	CC	£19.95	DOS2 Manual	CC	£8.95
Calculator	DISK	£16.95	Puzzles	CC	£19.95	Technical notes	CC	£16.95
Graph it	CC	£11.95	European Scene Jigsaw	CC	£19.95	Operating system listing	CC	£10.95
Statistics 1	CC	£11.95	Puzzles	CC	£19.95	DOS1 Listing	CC	£3.00
States and Capitals	CC	£8.95	Darts	CC	£19.95	CC = Compact Cassette		
Capitals of Europe	CC	£8.95	Cribbage & Dominoes	CC	£19.95	ROM = Plug-in ROM cartridge		
Assembler/Editor	ROM	£34.50	Snooker & Billiards	CC	£14.95	DISK = Floppy Diskette		
Microsoft Basic	DISK	£49.50	Tournament Pool & 8 Ball	CC	£19.95			
Video easel	ROM	£24.50	Pool	CC	£19.95			
Games			Jumbo Jet Pilot	CC	£29.95			
Energy Czar	CC	£8.95	Submarine Commander	CC	£24.50			
Hangman	CC	£8.95	Supercubes & Tilt	CC	£14.95			
Kingdom	CC	£8.95	Commercial					
Scram	CC	£12.95	Word Processor	DISK	£85.00			
Asteroids	ROM	£29.95						

STOP PRESS:
34 MORE PROGRAMMES!
New range of Atari APX American Programme Exchange Soft-ware just arrived.
Prices from **£9.95**

STOP PRESS:
34 MORE PROGRAMMES!
New range of Atari APX American
Programme Exchange Soft-ware just
arrived.
Prices from **£9.95**

The West End Atari Centre.
REW Video Products Ltd., 114-116 Charing Cross Rd.,
London WC2. Tel: 01-240 3386.

READ/WRITE

Stimulating Simulation!

I have just been reading the March edition of *MicroComputer Printout* and I was very interested in the article by Humphrey Walwyn, which describes the setting up of games using the computer as a control.

Once again we come back to the same problem of being left to our own devices to reinvent the wheel. When someone has done a lot of work on a particular program for any purpose whatsoever, it does seem a great pity that the information cannot be shared, thus increasing the speed of progress of that interest.

Please can you ask Mr. Walwyn if he could provide a working example of this type of program either directly to me, or to be published in a future edition of your very nice magazine, as the thought of having to spend a great deal of time just getting the first prototype off the ground is enough to stop it being attempted at all. Even if Mr. Walwyn could describe the rules of one specific game it would probably be sufficient to get some of us started, and I personally would be prepared to pay for such information.

R.G. Hall,
Water End,
Hemel Hempstead, Herts

We're glad to oblige, Mr Hall, and at no additional cost (though all gratuities gratefully received – used notes only and mark the envelope Editor, please!)

In this case, Humphrey Walwyn has published the listing and program structure for a game called Energiesic – commissioned and designed especially for MicroComputer Printout.

Sufficient detail has been included both for you to expand this program, and develop your own simulations.

We hope you enjoy playing Energiesic – certainly it has proved addictive in the office, and with a bit of creativity on the board and playing pieces, it leaves behind most commercial games.

POKEing it in!

In your recent article on V.D. U advised us 'RAMs' to avoid "too much interfacing" and also "...loading our floppy disk units indiscriminately." Although highly graphic, the description of the transmission of this bug by a simple handshake, baud me.

Never-the-less I decided to play safe and made a resolution to date-a lady P.C. B'cose such women are less volatile and their high-level language is most educational.

I can imagine the pleasant evenings we shall spend:- a quiet byte in a candle lit restaurant, a night at the PROM's, and then back home on the bus for a bit of input/output.

Mike Roesoft,
Romford

Suggest you refer to 'Interlude' program on Apple (reviewed MicroComputer Printout – October '81) for immediate remedy.

Sacred Cow

After seeing the wonderful artwork on the front covers of your magazine each month, I was wondering if there were any posters of some of them, especially the one with the cow (March 82). That face is wonderful.

A. Wainwright,
Sheffield



Alas no – though some of them would make rather good posters, wouldn't they? An exhibition of the work of Paul Sample, including the MicroComputer Printout covers is shortly to tour the country, and we will advise dates and venues as they become available.

Square-eyed

Please help! I've purchased a VIC 20, but because the cables that came with it are so short, I have to sit uncomfortably close to my TV set. Ideally, I would prefer to sit 10-15 ft away.

There are two variables between the TV and the VIC:

1. The video cable, connected to an RF modulator.

2. Another coaxial cable.

Which should I lengthen, and how?

Thanks for your help.

D. A. Pinless,
London SE14

p.s. Please make the answer as non-technical as possible!!

In view of the nature of this request we referred this one to our team of boffins who issued the following advice:

"It is essential that the characteristic line impedance is not over-attenuated as this

would give rise to undamped image reflection and electromagnetic losses. High frequency decoupling capacitors between the braid shielding and modulated signal carrier will help, though if in doubt, balance the degaussing effect with an appropriate number of picofarads in the ground loop. Raster-scan signals are particular prone to bursts of negative phase demodulation so it is best to perform a fast fourier transformation analysis before finally disconnecting your high-persistence oscilloscope."

Clear? No?

Actually, it is a simple matter of extending the co-axial cable between the TV and the UHF modulator. Use a new bit of cable (from any TV shop) rather than joining two pieces together. The end which plugs into the modulator is an ordinary phono plug – which can be purchased as a HiFi accessory. If your soldering isn't too hot, then most HiFi shops would be happy to make up such a cable.

Milk Monitor

Dear Editor,

It is obvious that Inside Trader knows much less about the Apple III than he would like to have you believe. Here is some scoop which may earn you a free drink or two when the two of you next meet at a watering hole: to enter the Apple III monitor simultaneously depress the two keys which bear Apple legends and then turn on the power switch. The device will come up in the monitor with an arrow showing. Naturally the monitor syntax is different from the Apple II but the functions are the same (examine, modify, move memory etc).

Please have a chat with the proofreader for your front cover. A diary is a sort of notebook in which adolescent females tell lies to themselves and to their mothers. Surely the situation depicted on the front of your March issue is a 'dairy'?

Hal W. Hardenbergh,
President,
DTACK GROUNDED,
Santa Ana, California

The Gas Bill Story

In Mike's Muses (March *MicroComputer Printout*) he waxes lyrical about computer 'accuracy'. Here is a simpler 'error' to prove the point:

```
10 LET A = 10*192.6
20 LET B = INT(10*192.6)
30 PRINT A
40 PRINT B
50 PRINT A-B
```

Lines 30 and 40 both print 1926. Line 50 does not give 0. Try it and see. I have tried this on a ZX81 and a TRS-80.

192.6 has been chosen as it is one of the values which give an error; caused by the way computers hold floating point numbers and the method of extracting integers.

This 'error' was spotted due to a ZX81 per-

READ/ WRITE

The Editor welcomes your letters, but if you require a personal reply please enclose an S.A.E.

son requesting help in a fairly simple program and being totally puzzled by the line 50 effect.

G. Bobler,
ZX-Guaranteed
Unsworth, Bury

How many of you ZX owners knew that one, then? Mike's Muse on computer accuracy was sobering to us all – and indeed, this sort of rounding problem is responsible for many of the apparently insoluble bugs which new programmers encounter.

Listings barred

Surely in the age of Information Technology and the microchip, there must be a better method of transferring listings via computer magazines? Consider the time and frustration taken in laboriously entering a program.

Would it be possible in the near future, as well as printing listings, to encode programs as a series of lines, similar to those used on grocery items? Then with suitable equipment one would just read the program into a computer using a light pen.

P. C. Whale,
Harlow, Essex

A very worthy idea, Mr. Whale – and one that is certainly feasible from a technical viewpoint. The idea has in fact been tried already in some American publications, and Hewlett Packard use such a system for loading programs from instruction manuals into their more advanced programmable calculators.

Two problems raise their ugly heads. First, for programs of the kind of length we publish in the magazine, several pages of Bar Codes would be necessary, because that is not a very compact method of representing characters.

Secondly – the hardware – someone has to produce a bar code reader at a sufficiently low price to persuade at least the majority of our readers to purchase one. And it must run on most microcomputers.

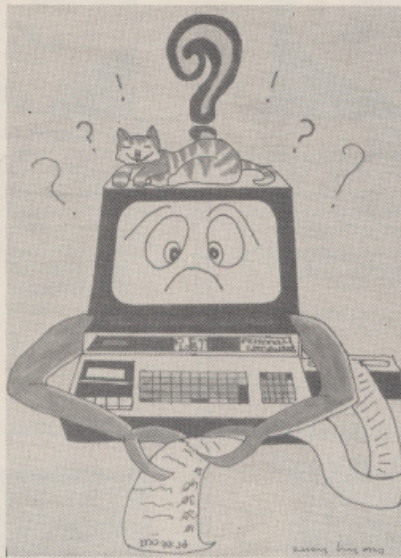
Nevertheless, it is a project we have considered for some time – and should the latter condition be fulfilled, we would be more than pleased to run a pilot scheme.

Program Verse

I just wanted you to see a picture of how I think a computer feels when we program it with all the computer garble one is supposed to program it with! I also thought you might like the little poem:

My PET

IF I SAVE much money
FOR my dog, I'll buy a NEW bone,
But IF he BYTES the OLD Postman again
He'll GOTO another HOME



FOR my PET is a nuisance,
Muddy PRINTS over my CLR HOME,
He POKES around in dustbins,
PEEKING up infections,
RUNning for elections,

What's the NEXT unexpected?

Lucy Lyons (age 13)
London NW3

Hope springs eternal

I wish to announce that Terry Hope is alive and well and sitting in the centre of a hawthorn bush in Hampshire. This simple self-protection should prevent all but the most determined Atari hackers from beating his brains in after a nasty omission from last month's article "What Atari Didn't Tell You".

Unhappily, there was something Terry didn't tell you when he dealt with poking Atari's poly counters. Either that or, as he avers, it got missed at the printers. Personally, I think it's a shame to blame the printers. However, the two-line SOUND and POKE suggestion on page 45 should have contained a second direct SOUND command immediately after the first. Terry says if it's left out the result is dead silence and a fear that Atari is malfunctioning or that one has gone deaf. Inserted, all is well. The missing line was SOUND 0,100,8,8.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to go out to the bush with Terry's lunch.

Mrs Elizabeth Hope
Westering, Hampshire

CP/M denounced

Firstly may I thank you for a well informed and impartial magazine.

Having read your April issue with interest, I noted that several times you mentioned the "more popular CP/M".

I feel that I should point out that as none of the 'big three', being PET, Apple and Tandy, offer CP/M as a standard product, and together must represent well in excess of 50% of microcomputers sold, that it must, in fact be more popular not to use CP/M.

The popularity of CP/M is a myth generated by the media, who have more contact with manufacturers than they do with users. Admittedly more manufacturers use CP/M than any other operating system, but there are more computer users who do not use CP/M than those who do.

If an operating system is specifically designed for the machine on which it runs it is almost invariably going to be more efficient for that machine, than a "packaged" operating system.

However, the most important point, as mentioned in many of your articles, is the software. If the software is written properly and is suitable for the job intended, the user should not even be aware of the existence of an operating system, let alone be concerned with which one it is.

I would therefore be grateful if you would place less emphasis on the operating system in articles written for the end user.

This is only of concern to software writers, and they already know the good and bad points of operating systems.

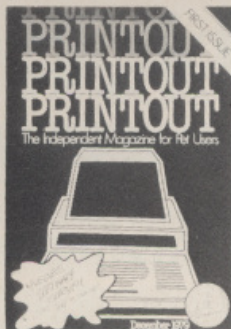
D.G. West,
Chess Consultancies Ltd.,
Cheetham Hill,
Manchester M8

Well stated, Mr West. We certainly agree that an operating system or application package written for one specific machine will be far more efficient and probably more user-friendly than a packaged one.

CP/M has in some ways become an excuse for new hardware manufacturers not providing software support for their machines. "It runs CP/M" they say "so it has access to a huge library of applications software." What they don't say is that many of the best business packages are written not for CP/M but for one specific machine such as the PET, Apple or Tandy.

In any event, we predict that CP/M will start to lose its hold with the arrival of newer operating systems. What is called for is greater compatibility between hardware manufacturers, not a blanket operating system that works on the lowest common denominator.





December 1979

PET in education - Survey of Business Software - Double Density Plotting - Jim Butterfield Interview - Photography Course review - The Changing Face of Commodore - Read/Write: Your questions answered* - Hotline News & Products* - Pets & Pieces column* - Peeks & Pokes: gossip* Starred items indicate regular features also appearing in subsequent issues.



January 1980

PET in Public Relations - A Visit to the Commodore - CompuThink Disk Drive evaluation - Survey of Programming Aids - PET's Video Logic - WordPro II review - Modular Programming (article & listing) - Basic ROM addresses.



Feb/March 1980

Speech Synthesis on PET - HitchHiker's Guide to PET: Review - Commodore 3050 Disk Drive evaluated - PET Games: report - New Approach to Subroutines - Tokens in Basic - Pet-taid review - Analogue to Digital devices - The PET Keyboard.



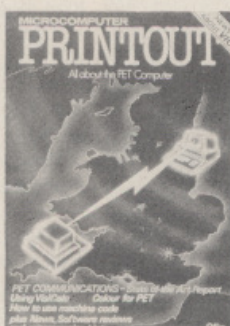
April 1980

Commodore Printer evaluated - Commodore's New Technology: report from USA - Kit Spencer Interview - PET as Secret Agent - Assembly Language programming aids - Commodore Assembler reviewed - 6502 Assembly Language Programming - Book review - Tommy's Tips*: Software problems solved.



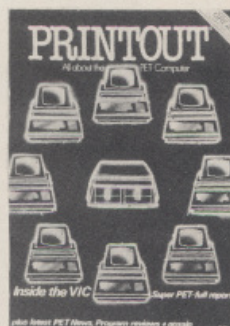
January 1981

How to convert programs from old to new ROMs and back - Is OZZ the best information handling program yet? - How to choose a printer - Critical Guide to Printers - Commodore's 1 megabyte Disk Drive: what it is; how to use it - Can computers teach Birth Control? - Random Access for PET disks - Fast Graphics Technique explained: full listing - How I developed the Stringy Floppy!



Feb/March 1981

What will VIC be like? - VisiCalc and how to use it - Easier disk handling with Turnkey ROMs - All you need to know about communications - Reports on eight communications products - Colour for the PET - Free: a two line word processing program - Dipping into machine code - Index to Vol. 1 - The Assembler Chip - does it work?



April 1981

What Commodore didn't tell you about the Super PET - Guide to Business Software - How to buy a computer - All you need to know about multi-user systems - MUPET profile - Report on the Multi-PET System - How to use cassette files - VIC in Vegas - The Great Computer Quiz - Inside the VIC - Can a Computer Teach you to Type? - PROKIT: programming aid for business users - LIST program for non-PET printers.



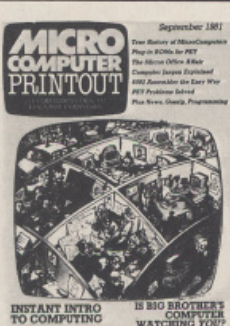
May 1981

Why VIC is the Best Home Computer yet - How to Protect Programs against Piracy - Screen Scratchpad program listing - Interfaces Explained - Critical Guide to Computer Books - Animating PET (with program listing) - My First Four Days with VIC - Pilot language Explained - How to use subroutines - plus software reviews.



August 1981

Looking for Lucan: our program predicts whereabouts of missing Earl - Software Awards: Programs of the Year for different micros - How to choose a Cheap Computer - Checkmate! Two top chess programs battle it out - Financial Modelling on Micros - Prestel on PET - How to write programs others can understand - Bernard Levin tests the Bionic Briefcase - How to Buy a Printer - Sorts Explained - PET programming problems solved - How BASIC Works



September 1981

Computing on Citizens Band Radio - Do You Need Disk - How much does Big Brother's computer know about You? - The True History of Microcomputers - Compleat Computer Crib Sheet - Silicon Office: Most Sophisticated program yet - Plug-in Programs for PET - How to write structured programs - Computer writes Daily Newspaper.



October 1981

Computers That Talk - Which Computer Should I Buy? - The Naughtiest Program in the World - IBM's Personal Computer - Beginners Guide to Personal Computing - What is CP/M? - How the KGB Steal Chips - Graphics for Sinclair ZX-81 - Anatomy of a Microcomputer - Daisywheel Dual - Computer Psychiatrist program listing.



November 1981

What computers will look like in the future - PET's Screen Editor - All about Hard Disk - Programs that write Newspapers - The Truth about Computer Dating - Software Buyers Crib Sheet - Which Computer Should I Buy? - Developing a games program - Peripherals for Apple - Son of VisiCalc - What use is Sinclair's 1K of RAM?

May 1980

Personal Electronic Transactions* : Formatting numbers - Hardware Repeat key : review - High Resolution Graphics : Review and User Report : CompuThink 800K disk drive : test - The Game of LIFE - PET User Groups - Educational Software reviewed.

June 1980

PET Show Guide - 8050 SuperPET : Full evaluation - Book review* - Fantasy Simulations reviewed - Interview with Commodore's founder - PET Tokens for text - Hanover Fair Report - PRINT USING Function for PET : listing.



June 1981

The VIC Report: What it will and won't do - How BASIC works: PET's BASIC interpreter - Computer Jargon Explained - Complete Guide to Interfaces for PET - The MiniDigital Cassette Recorder Reviewed - Investigation of Commodore's Approved Products scheme - Plug-in-chips for Businessmen - How good is Comsoft's Data Management System? - New Products at the PET Show - How to use the Time function - Screen Prompts - Reducing Significant Figures.

September 1980

Colour for your PET - Jim Butterfield's Amazing PET seminar - How to Write Better Programs - Is PET Logical? - PET has a Light Pen - Disk Lockouts and Protecting Passwords - Binary Numbering - AND, OR, NOT : Logical Operators.

October 1980

Petaid : A do-it-yourself database? SuperChip : evaluation - Sorting Out Sorts - Screen Display Aids : review - What's Wrong with WordPro? - Data Pointers - Improving Other People's Programs - Little Genius - Not Proven! : review - Reversing the Screen.



July 1981

Could a Micro Have Caught the Ripper? Video Games vs. Computer Games - Beginners Guide to Word processing - What the Salesman won't Tell You - Assembler for Beginners - Cipher Generator program listing - The Truth About BASIC Compilers for PET - 10 Amazing Facts About Micros - Computers in Schools: Where the Government got it wrong - How BASIC Works II - The Great Computer Race: game



December 1981

The Top Ten Micros - Micro-computer Crime - Investigation - Do Business need 16-Bits? - Converting BASIC to run on your machine - The Ten most asked Beginners Questions - Bluff Your Way into Computing! - Plug-ins for Apple and Sinclair - Is VIC worth the wait? - PET Detective Game - Useful Data Structures - The micro controlled kitchen.



January 1982

All about Colour Graphics - What are Networks? - How to buy a Business System - Working from home with a micro - D.I.Y. Business programming - Converting BASIC programs - PET Music - Apple Word Processing - Life game for Sinclair - Chessboard graphics on VIC - Features on Osborne 1 and Sirius 1.

BACK ISSUES

Now is your chance to catch up on some of the important features you missed. But hurry! We are running low on several issues.

To: MicroComputer Printout, P.O. Box 2, Goring, Reading RG8 9LN

I enclose £..... for the following back issues at £1.25 each
Charge my Access/Mastercard/Visa/Barclaycard

No.....

(Please note minimum order quantity on credit cards £5.00)

- ☐ Dec 79 ☐ Jan 80 ☐ Feb/Mar 80 ☐ April 80 ☐ May 80
☐ June 80 ☐ Sept 80 ☐ Oct 80 ☐ Jan 81 ☐ Feb/Mar 81
☐ April 81 ☐ May 81 ☐ June 81 ☐ July 81 ☐ August 81
☐ Sept 81 ☐ Oct 81 ☐ Nov 81 ☐ Dec 81 ☐ Jan 82 ☐ Feb 82
☐ Apr 82

- ☐ PET Companion (Vol. 1 bound) at £9.95 ☐ Binder at £3.95
☐ Subscription to Vol. 3 (1982) at £11.40 UK, £15.60 Eire,
£17.40 Europe, \$29 USA airspeeded,
£30 rest of world air (delete whichever inapplicable)

NAME:

ADDRESS:

Postcode:



February 1982

How microcomputers are evolving into Robots - Consumer test on 8 popular micros - Should you wait for the new business micros from the Big Boys? - Are you in touch with aliens? - Converting BASIC programs - The microcomputer under business conditions - String Handling - Four programs for the ZX-81 - Great Computing Disasters - Custom Characters on VIC



April 1982

Energy crisis simulation - Computers in the movies - Artificial Intelligence - How to buy a Sales Ledger - Solicitors - Application special - Hi-res graphics for VIC - Spelling Corrector Programs - Five business micros evaluated - More secrets from Atari - Which programming language is for you? - Adventure on Atari and ZX-81 - Does the Sirius 1 obsolete all other micros? - Decision Maker program listing.

Telex via Computer

'The Medium is the Message', as Marshall MacLuhan remarked in his incomprehensible 1964 opus *'Understanding Media'*. But last week this questionable thesis was vindicated – as our production manager, Wendy, struggled to restore a news story into something resembling English.

The article – on communications needless to say – had been telexed to our office, retyped and then keyed afresh into the typesetting machine. The result, as you would expect, was gibberish.

Wouldn't it be nice, we thought, not for the first time, if the whole thing could be automated. And now, fellow sufferers, it can. For Encotel Systems have developed the necessary software to automate the sending of telex messages by microcomputer.

Here's how it works. The computer is linked via an RS232 port to the telex interface unit which is connected directly to the ordinary telex network. Once the software has been loaded, messages can be sent and received *in the background*, while you carry on with your normal computing tasks.

Encotel have the telex system up and running on the Intertec Superbrain, but will shortly have versions for other CP/M machines. British Telecom have tested it and given full BT approval.

The interesting thing from our point of view is that standard CP/M text files, such as those created by word processing software, can now be sent as telex messages.

Telex messages are of course all in capitals, but the system carries out the necessary ASCII to Baudot data conversions, compensating where necessary for lower case letters. Further details can be had from Bob Jones at Encotel Systems, 530-538 Purley Way, Croydon, Surrey.

Getting stories back from our foreign correspondents in time for copydate has provided more than a few headaches in the past, as the Editor's depleted stock of Aspro's bears witness. This month former *Times* correspondent Michael Frenchman, will be taking delivery of the Osborne 1 briefcase computer he bought after reviewing it in *The Thunderer*. He plans to transmit copy for future articles to us via the international telephone network using an acoustic coupler and the *Microlink* program.

Perhaps the first British journalist to file stories in this way was another of our contributors, Guy Kewney, who managed to scoop competing trade weeklies with a report from this year's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. He too used the Osborne 1 because of its portability. Details on how you can communicate from Osborne Computers at 38 Tanners Drive, Blakelands North, Milton Keynes.

GOTO JAIL

Go To Jail – Do Not Pass Go – Do Not Collect £200. Yes, it is *Monopoly*, the classic property speculation game in which Whitehall and Park Lane change hands for £375 a piece and you can pick up a railway station for just £200.

Derek Tidman of Work Force has adapted it to run on Sinclair ZX-81s equipped with 16K of RAM.

Up to six players can compete, with the computer acting as board, rule-book, umpire, dice thrower, accountant and rent collector. The player is guided through the game by a menu indicating whose turn it is and what property and cash they hold.

The game is played using such commands as BUY, SELL, MORTGAGE, BUILD and so on. As *Monopoly* games frequently turn into marathons, Derek has sensibly included a routine to SAVE the current game on tape.

ZX81 Monopoly costs £8 from him at 140 Wilsden Avenue, Luton. Somewhat cheaper than the original!

Now if this darn computer would just throw me a double I could get out of JAIL and rejoin the game....

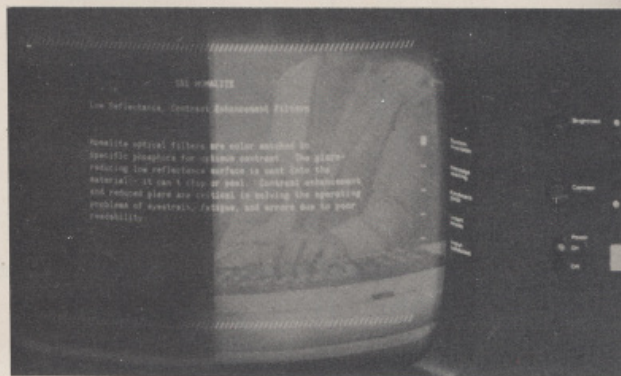
Curse of the Hotline

Selwyn Ward is a man who never touches wood, and breaks mirrors without a second thought. He must be, because he has just asked me to publicise his new journal *Computer Games Review*.

Starting with the June issue the £10 a year bi-monthly will

concentrate on reviews of games programs. Ward's address is 10 Star Lane, St. Mary Cray, Kent.

Bearing in mind the kami-kaze style record of organs previously published on this page, I give it three months. At the outside. Touch wood.



Anti-glare filters are hardly a new idea, but the Homalite low reflectance, contrast enhancement screens must be the Rolls Royce of filters.

The idea of course is to cut down eyestrain and fatigue, or in my case illegibility – my computer screen being cunningly positioned to reflect whatever sun there is right into my eyes.

SGL who make the Homalite filter will actually sell you one that is colour matched to the phosphor of your screen. The bad news is that they are at 76 Euclid Avenue, Hadonfield, New Jersey 08033, once uncharitably described as the armpit of the USA.

Apple Trainers

Everyone has their favourite software horror story. Mine concerns the man who bought a Payroll package that worked perfectly, but for one thing: it used American tax codes and required all salaries to be in dollars!

Apple have had a truly original idea that could make such disappointments a thing of the

past. Called *Trainer Packs*, they contain the kernal of such programs as *VisiCalc III* and *Applewriter III*. For £18 you get the documentation and a diskette which allows you to do a sample run of the real program in the privacy of your own home. All in all, a considerable improvement on the usual five-minute high pressure demo you might be treated to in the store – if you are lucky.

As you will have gathered, the Trainer packs are for Apple III. Other titles available in the series are *Mail List* and *Business Graphics*, with more to follow.

Can you claim the cost back if you subsequently buy the real thing? "Um-Err" said Apple when I enquired. So it can't do any harm to ask.

Talking of Apple software, the company are about to publish a useful directory. I counted 17 'approved' programs for Apple III. The latest of these include a communications package called *Access III*, the *Script III* text editor for Pascal text, and a *Pascal Utilities Library*. The directory is free.





Shoot the Messenger

I have bad news for the promoters of the forthcoming *Computer Controlled Video Workshop*. The video disk is about to be pronounced Dead On Arrival.

Which is a pity, since video disks, with their ability to store hundreds of thousands of frames of information on a single low-cost platter, offer a far more cost-effective means of storing data than yer actual Winchester – let alone floppy – disks.

It is fully seven years since the first video disk player was announced, and RCA, Philips and sundry Japanese megaliths have been selling them in the States since 1977. Without, it must be admitted, a great deal of success.

In fact it was the video disk manufacturers who first learned to appreciate that it is software that sells hardware, a lesson lately rediscovered by micro-men.

The fact that video disks can't record didn't help much, either.

The final nail in the video disk coffin is the agreement of a single standard for low-cost miniature

video tape cassettes, upon which the signatures of Sony, Philips, and the other big video names is barely dry.

Friends in low places tell me that this has already led to money earmarked for the development of the video disk being diverted to said low-cost miniature video cassette recorder projects. Without the economies of scale offered by a consumer mass market the video disk looks as if it will become a rather more expensive piece of kit than it is at present.

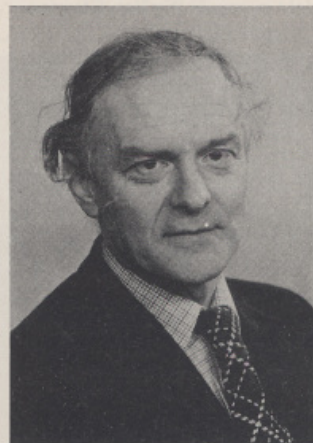
All this has happened so recently that the brake has yet to be applied to the development of computer interfaces to video disks. Indeed, an enterprising American company is already offering a video disk storage device linked to an Apple. Delegates to the *Computer Controlled Video Workshops* (admission £275!) will be able to play with it on May 18th and 19th and June 17th and 18th. Details from 108 Kew Road, Richmond, Surrey.

The squeeze is on

My problem with floppy disk systems is that I can never get enough on them. Though different types of floppy disk vary in capacity by a factor of up to 10, sooner or later one finds oneself swapping disks around like playing cards for lack of space.

Which is why computer scientists all over the world have been researching into *Data Compression* – ways of squeezing more information into the same number of bytes. The problem to date has been that the best methods offer an improvement of only about 20%, and are very slow both at encoding the data into its compressed form and subsequently decoding it again.

Enter Dr. Dennis Andrews;



he's a sort of cross between neurobiologist and engineer (in case the photograph hasn't already given that away) from the University of Keele. He's come up with a program called E40 which claims to reduce text files down to about 40% of their original size – and in not much more time than it takes to make a copy of the file!

Maddeningly he won't tell me how it's done. Even my best set of trick questions (guaranteed to extract a full confession from the most tight-lipped company spokesman) reveal only that E40 is based on 'statistical properties of English'. "Even the University's computing department don't believe it's possible", chortles the good doctor.

The utility requires no knowledge of what is in the file to compress it, since it can cope with all 256 possible ASCII character codes – including the special symbols used for embedded controls in word processing.

Though primarily designed for normal English prose, E40 apparently copes with Olde English Poetry, technical manuals

and even straight numerical data. We have yet to try it out on Tommy's 'English'.

E40 was developed with mainframes, minis and micros in mind, and in the latter case is now available for any machine that will run CP/M. A 6502 version is apparently 'nearly finished', aimed at the Apple II, III and (ultimately) PET.

E40 works as a utility in RAM (occupying around 9K) and you simply compress or expand any file on the disk. This rules out random access files – where you only use part of a file at once. Andrews hopes that several word processing suppliers will link their products to E40 – thereby making the whole process transparent to the user.

E40 is available for £100 + VAT (inc. P&P) according to the good doctor, or £99.95 + VAT if you believe his marketing advisors. You can get it from Keele Codes Ltd., University of Keele, Keele, Staffs. ST5 5BG.

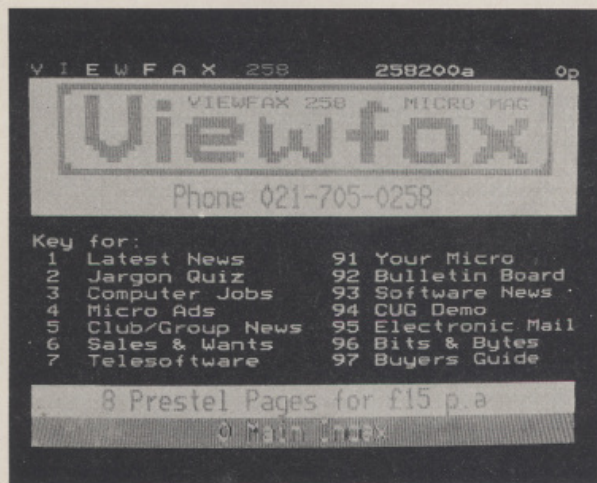
Angry Letter

'Angry of East Grinstead' has taken me to task for writing about the Olivetti mini-Winchester disk last month. It works with neither his PET, Apple nor, he says, any other proprietary system.

Stand easy, 'Angry'; I have the answer. The boffins at Small Systems Engineering are even now putting the finishing touches on a mini-Winchester disk system that will plug directly into your PET, giving up to 12 megabytes of hard disk storage under either the PET Disk Operating System, or CP/M. Or both!

What's more, under CP/M, this new MW1000 system will run *without* the PET if any standard terminal is plugged into the built-in RS232 serial port. This, as the Small Boffin is not slow to point out, amounts to a very economical, stand-alone Z-80 based CP/M computer with 60K of RAM and a hard disk.

£3360 is the cost of the 12 megabyte system, although there is a 3Mb version for a more modest £2538 + VAT. The Small Systems boffins reside at 2-4 Canfield Place, London N.W.6. Tel: 01-328 7145.



I think I had better tell you about these people, because single handedly they have convinced me to do something that a mega pound advertising campaign from British Telecom failed to do – and that's to become a Prestel subscriber.

Folks in question are Messrs. Reid and Henry who run a free daily electronic magazine all about micros, called Viewfax 258. Apart from news, there is also free software to download. It is accessible to 15,000 odd subscribers to Prestel.

Obviously the money has to come from somewhere, and Viewfax raise it by selling pages at £15 a time to computer manufacturers and dealers to run their own newsletters, bulletin boards, product directories and dealer lists.

One major advantage Viewfax enjoys over other bulletin boards is that it is available 24 hours a day at local call rates. Prestel information is also sent at four times the speed of most bulletin board systems.

The magazine has allocated a number of pages to computer clubs which they can edit themselves free of charge. Response frames are provided for electronic mail and the ordering of products and services. Micro owners are also offered free space in a 'Sales & Wants' section.

You can reach Viewfax 258 by telephoning 021-705 0258 or use Prestel mailbox 021704115 if you are already on the system.

New generation of PETs, VICs coming

EXCLUSIVE: Commodore are about to announce not one but five completely new computers.

They range from an intriguing sub £100 computer/music synthesiser/video game machine, to a powerful new business computer with 256K of RAM.

Commodore plan to unveil the new range – which will eventually kill off the PET – at the Hanover Trade Fair in late April.

Here is a model by model breakdown with the (hitherto) confidential details of each machine:

THE ULTIMAX is a low-cost combined computer, sound synthesiser and colour video game machine. Like the current VIC-20, it normally plugs into a TV screen, but for special high resolution effects it can be used with a colour monitor.

The *Ultimax* accepts plug-in cartridges, but *not* the same ones as the VIC-20. A variety of video game cartridges will be available, as will a sound synthesiser with 'piano' overlay for the membrane keyboard.

To compute, a BASIC cartridge must be slotted in. This is not the 'standard' PET/VIC/Microsoft BASIC, but a subset of it minus trig. functions and dimensioned arrays.

Did I tell you that the colour graphics are superb? Well they are, with up to 16 different colours on screen at any one time, and high resolution of 320 x 200 pixels (picture elements or points) built-in.

The designers have also adapted the 'sprite' graphics techniques developed at MIT for the Logo language. A sprite is a single character that you create on a 24 x 21 matrix, which can then be moved around the screen independently of anything else. It might be a Space Invader, a transistor or whatever you choose.

In fact, you can have up to 256 such sprites and in a variety of colours. They can pass over or under each other on the screen, or simply collide. Up to eight sprites may be on any one line, so large 3D effects can be created. Because screen images can be moved pixel by pixel, both horizontal and vertical scrolling is possible.

Whereas on the VIC-20 both audio and video output are controlled by the VIC chip, on the *Ultimax* the VIC chip has been split into a 6566 chip to handle the more complex video display, and a 6581 SID sound synthesiser. A variety of sounds can be generated, making it possible to simulate

different instruments in eight voices.

The CPU is a 6510, essentially an upgrade of the PET's trusty 6502 chip. It uses the same machine codes but has an additional 8-bit output port that is bit-by-bit programmable. This allows more memory to be accessed than on the 6502, but without recourse to memory management routines.

The *Ultimax* uses the standard Commodore cassette system for storage, and comes with 1K of screen RAM, 1K of colour RAM and 1K of user memory. The BASIC cartridge includes an additional 2.5K of RAM.

Probable price: £99 inc. VAT, but with CBM marketeer John Baxter covetously eyeing the lucrative Sinclair market, he might persuade Big Bob Gleadow to let him sell it for less.

Target date for release is September, but you know about Commodore and their release dates

Much heralded the **VIC-40**

forward.

It will be possible to plug more accessories in without the need for multiplexer: four games paddles, two joysticks or two light pens.

Case and keyboard will be the same as the VIC-20.

According to the Commodore leaks department, there are also plans for a direct connect modem, Z-80 softcard, Extended BASIC ROM and Extended Machine Code cartridges, the latter necessitated by the lack of a built-in machine code monitor.

Release date is currently scheduled for the end of the year.

The **Commodore 64** looks like a replacement for the 4000 series PETs, from where we stand. However, Commodore are likely to continue making the latter for as long as there is a demand.

Smart new ergonomic styling resembles a rounded off PET, with detachable keyboard and tilt-and-swivel screen. The new keyboard seemed a considerable

Disk drives will be built into the base. These will run off DMA so they should be very fast.

The CPU is a 6509 (no blood relation of the 6809) with bank switching between the 16K RAM banks. Screen format is 80 columns by 25 lines with a built-in high resolution graphics capability (but will it be implemented?) There is also a 24 hour clock with programmable alarm, so no doubt someone will offer a battery back up to keep it going when the power is off.

Commodore have at last provided both RS232 and IEEE-488 interfaces onboard. Judging by the preliminary spec, wot I have had sight of, it looks like the full, debugged IEEE-488 – at long last!

Taking the 256K version, 64K of memory will be allocated to the operating system, probably to allow space for additional processors. It is likely there will be slots for Z-80, 6809 and 8080 processors. Hints of a revolutionary new 'universal' computer capable of running "any" software have been dropped by Commodore bigwigs recently. Despite enthusiastic reporting in the national press, we remain unconvinced; the Z-80 softbox for the PET is hardly a new item, and the CBM micro mainframe already offers dual processors.

Returning, reluctantly, to the *CBM 256* memory map, we find 128K available for softloaded languages and operating systems (such as CP/M?), and additional space for expansion ROMs.

It is also worth noting that the memory will be capable of expansion to 512K with an external box.

On the software side we find that the language subset of the 6509 is almost identical to the well-tried 6502, so although there is no direct compatibility with software for the 8000 series PETs (aagh!), conversion "will be easy". Their words, not mind.

Rather sensibly Commodore have chosen to get their 'Approved Products' suppliers involved before, rather than after, the launch of the new machine. At a confidential briefing session, into which I managed to insinuate myself, one of the software publishers asked the obvious question: 'With all this RAM space and memory mapping, will character sets be definable?' Answer: 'That's why we invited you here today'.... Proving beyond doubt that the Commodore still believes that Software sells

Commodore II:
Shape of things to come



leaves most prognosticators with egg on face. Contrary to prediction it has more in common with the *Ultimax* than the current VIC-20 model. It will, for example, accept *Ultimax* cartridges, but not VIC-20 ones – a further example of lack of long range planning at CBM.

It looks as if there will be two models, one priced at about £300 with 16K of RAM, and a 64K version at around the £500 mark. The latter will, as with the PET, have 32K of RAM accessible by the user from BASIC. The remainder up to 52K will be available for languages etc.

The VIC-40 will share the same ROMs as the existing VIC-20, so there shouldn't be any compatibility problems there. In fact it will be possible to redefine the memory map, so conversion and tailoring of PET and VIC software should be straight

improvement when I tried it, both from the point of view of 'feel', and the provision of ten programmable function keys.

Commodore's marketing bods reckon the *CBM 64* will slot in just about the VIC-40. Screen layout is still only 40 columns however, but BASIC 4 will be implemented, so all that 4000 series software should run without difficulty.

The **Commodore II** is where it all starts to get interesting. Two models are planned, with 128K and 256K of RAM memory respectively. Some sources hold they will be marketed as the *CBM 128* and *CBM 256*.

Whatever the designation, both will have the same space-age styling as the *Commodore 64*, much of the design work on which was performed by Porsche before Commodore fell out with them.



Hardware. It is on the basis of this broad base of supporting software that the new range of computers will be marketed.

One final observation on the CBM 128 and 256: there appears to be 5 levels of interrupt, so the designers may well have multi-tasking in mind. The implementation will probably be left to an independent software house, if past experience is anything to go by.



Soap Opera

It has become a tradition on this page that there should always be a column entitled 'What Is Going On At Atari?'

It being business as unusual at Atari, I will endeavour to bring you up to date. Last month's episode saw Atari signing over a

Oh, and there is also the kernel of a network built-in. No doubt the same will apply to the commercial development of that also.

Price? Probably £2000+ for the 128K model; £2500+ for the 256K versions. Availability from around late summer time.

Of course there are still persistent rumours of a 16-bit machine from Commodore – but that's another story.

(reportedly) six figure sum to their erstwhile UK agents, Ingersoll, for the right to distribute their own products here.

This episode finds ace Atari marketer Pip Errington, poised to defect to Commodore, her head turned by the blandishments of Range Rover-driving Big Bob Gleadow.

Mystery surrounds the whereabouts of erstwhile general manager Steve Bernard and his amazing leather trousers.

And what is to become of Ingersoll's contracts with software authors? (not a lot, according to virile pipe-smoking Ian Lawrie of *Silicon Chip* who says he will paddle his own canoe).

Confused? You won't be after the next episode of *Soap*.

Serious Software

With ACT signing up new dealers for their 16-bit Sirius 1 at a rate of more than one a day, there has been quite a race to get commercial software up on the system.

First past the post has been Zenithplan with a Sirius version of the Compact accounting suite, comprising Order Processing and Invoicing (£700), Sales, Purchase and Nominal Ledgers, Inventory and Payroll at £350 each. All are said to be capable of integration.

ACT who have their own integrated accounting suite called *Pulsar* due for imminent release, were putting a brave face on it. "We are pleased to see Sirius supported" said a spokesman through gritted teeth.



New HP-87 personal computer from Hewlett-Packard features high-resolution, built-in 80-column display for text and graphics, and seven special function keys which (with shift) make available 14 user-defined functions.

Hewlett-Packard enjoy what almost amounts to a cult following amongst the engineering fraternity. When their HP-85 personal computer was unveiled two years ago I hardly knew whether to be more impressed by the business-like design or the prices. And if you don't encounter many HP-85s outside engineering offices, those prices are the reason.

Now Hewlett-Packard are launching a new computer, the HP-87 which disposes of most of the other points of criticism, notably that of an overly small screen.

The new machine has high resolution (544 x 240), 80 column text and graphics display plus the ability to add substantially more memory – up to 544 kilobytes. That may sound like a lot, but it equates to a VisiCalc worksheet of 254 by 63 completely full cells, and problems as complex as that, though on the large side, are far from unknown.

The standard HP-87 is being supplied with 32K bytes of RAM at £1650 + VAT.

HP offer their own range of software covering scientific and

engineering, and some business applications. Belatedly they have introduced a plug-in CP/M module which will give users access to a much broader range of software, including programs written in Pascal, FORTRAN and COBOL languages. However, the CP/M system, which incorporates a Z-80 program, costs a not insubstantial £972.

The HP-87 is described as 'upwards compatible' with the '85, which means that programs for the earlier machine will run on the new one.

HP offer their own line of peripherals including, as you would expect, single and dual floppy disks, and for larger, richer customers, a 5 megabyte fixed Winchester disk with 270K built-in mini floppy. There is also a new "low-cost" graphics plotter costing £969.

HP have their own Literature Enquiry Section at King Street, Winkersham, Wokingham, Berks, who will be happy to swamp you with brochures.

...The strangely-shaped Earth creature twitched, his eldritch non-complex eyes desperately searching for an RS232C interface to his ship's host computer. With a nonchalant upside-down smile, Zog the Alien tapped keys on the box in his hand and read the answer he expected; with reptilian grace he drew his disintegrator... (© A. Morgan 1980, from the creator of 'Zog Goes to the Laundrette' and the current top seller, 'Zog and His Vet have an Identity Crisis'.)

In one powerful paragraph, a sadly-neglected science fiction writer sums up the benefits of pocket computers; you can figure out whether Earthlings are hostile without plugging into outside power, either electrical or computational. No alien should be without one.

And if the industry pundits are to be believed, earth creatures too will soon feel under-equipped without their portable micro. Listen to Egil Juliusson, of Dallas prediction firm Future Computing, as he projects sales figures of \$750m for the pocket computer market by 1985. And Egil goes on to say that this represents 2,500,000 over-the-counter sales — figures comparable with the numbers floated for sales of personal computers in general (conventional ones, that is) by that time.

Wrist-watch calculator

It should be clear that we are not talking about your common or garden pocket calculator here, let alone the appalling wrist-watch calculator that has to be poked in the keys with a sharp stick. Egil would not have kept his futurist's job long if he had started 1982 by predicting big sales for these elderly devices.

No, what we have here are real microcomputers on an even smaller scale than usual, full-feature pocket machines with their own long-life power sources, displays, tiny peripherals, and high-level programming languages. Little computers that can run the same kind of programs now running on the micros in today's offices and homes, only they can do it in tomorrow's airliners, tilting trains, or public conveniences.

The big marketing push in the new area is now on, trying to convince cable-bound computer users that they have nothing to lose but their interfaces. On the back cover of a recent *Byte*, science and science fiction writer Isaac Asimov — looking even more Dickensian than usual in his enormous Rhodes Boyson side-whiskers — holds up a Radio Shack pocket computer to the reader's gaze. Gives the machine that futuristic air, see? And more of the same is on the way as the Japanese firms gear up their formidable production lines to the new boom, and the Western computer firms wonder what to do with it.

Once again it seems that the US and Europe have been caught with their technology down by the Japanese. Which is odd, historically speaking...

The history of the pocket calculator and the digital watch is too well known to bear repeating; suffice it to say that the US companies

developed the chips and the Japanese companies cleaned up with the mass sales, leaving US producers like the fledgling Commodore, Hewlett-Packard and Texas Instruments in the mire.

Texas needed the talents of Electric Robb Wilnot to pull the calculator and watch division round, and it was this success that got him the perilous ICL job.

So now, those little calculators that every school child seems to own — and I am proud to maintain my mathematical literacy by using long division on my tax returns — are almost all from Japan.

Dynabook

Still, the US could have learned something from the debacle. It was obvious that very soon the technology would be available for a true pocket computer, converging from various areas of research. And, as far back as 1971 Xerox's Palo Alto Research Center, set up a year earlier to do long-term product research, decided that the 'executive workstation' of the 80s would be what the renowned Alan Kay and the boys called the Dynabook; this was to be no conventional cobbling together of screen, keyboard, and disks but a sort of notebook-sized package like the famous Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy. It would have a flat-screen display like the later digital watches, and would be able to link up with bigger computer systems and databases.

"To be a hand-held/portable/pocket computer in my book requires a recognised high-level language for the user to program in..."

This should have given a hint. But remember that this was more than 10 years ago, before the microprocessors, high-density memory chips, and liquid crystal displays we take for granted now, so don't criticise Xerox for not producing the goods.

Even so, as the technologies advanced it still seemed there was a lack of vision in the US. Watches and calculators, yes. Talking language translators, yes, Digital doorbells with 24 tunes (God help us), certainly. But pulling the technological threads together into a pocket computer was left to Japanese firms.

What are the technologies that have made pocket computers possible, and turned the Dynabook from a dream into a possibility or probability? There are three main areas — chips, displays, and batteries.

On the chip front, there was Complementary Metal Oxide Semiconductor (CMOS) (to we cognoscenti) design. This was one of the early ways of integrating transistors onto a

single chip to make a MOS integrated circuit; the complementary bit means that each element of the circuit on the chip is made up of two linked transistors, one built in PMOS and one in NMOS. As you might expect, this type of circuit, using two MOS technologies in each element, took more production stages than straight NMOS and gave much lower circuit densities.

So CMOS was put on the back-burner, and CMOS products were premium-price chips for special applications where their advantages of low-power operation and low susceptibility to power supply fluctuations came in useful. In other words, for battery-powered portable equipment.

Energy savings

But as NMOS designs became more complex and the microprocessor made its appearance, CMOS chips actually became easier to make than many NMOS products and came back to the forefront. RCA came up with the CDP 1802 CMOS micro, and CMOS memory and logic chips started to come off the lines. Energy-saving became fashionable.

Still, even in CMOS the pocket computer was a tricky proposition. Displaying computer information has long been the province of the cathode ray tube, which even its staunchest supporters admit is a very bulky piece of kit. Open up the nearest micro and take a look; it's a good bet that the CRT takes up most of the room inside. Even worse, a CRT display takes up a lot of electrical power and a portable computer is not much use if displaying information drains your batteries in minutes rather than hours. Light-emitting diodes were a better bet, the familiar little red lights you now see twinkling on any old bit of electrical equipment. These were in fact used in the early digital watches, but were not a great success.

As an example, consider Uncle Clive Sinclair's Black Watch, which displayed the digital time when you pushed a button on the side. This used LEDs for its display, and came in for criticism from people who reckoned that Clive had actually put the clock back 100 years by producing a wrist-watch that needed both the user's hands to operate. Best rest assured that the normally-blank black watch face was no aesthetic gimmick; once again, the power consumption of the LEDs was too high for a long battery life if they were left switched on the whole time.

The liquid crystal display, or LCD, soon came to the rescue. Using some tricky chemical and physical effects involving twisted molecules and polarised light, these displays were cheap to make, easy to read, capable of high-resolution, and — most important — consumed very little power. Their operational life (in years) is short compared to LEDs, but that's nothing compared with the advantages.

So the low-power chips and displays were ready. And then battery research seemed to step up a gear as well, fired by the calculator/watch phenomenon. Exotic materials like lithium, silver, and even sulphur were pressed into service as power sources, and the



BE A SHARP BUSINESSMAN

for only
£278 + VAT

COMPUTER AND 4-COLOUR PRINTER

The sensational new PC-1500 Pocket Computer approaches the Personal Computer in ability. Add the revolutionary CE-150 Graphic Printer and a cassette recorder and you have a complete, battery powered, Business Computer System that travels in your briefcase!

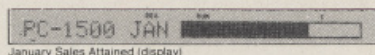
SHARP CE-150
4-colour Graphic
Printer
£130.39 + VAT;
Total **£149.95**



SHARP PC-1500
'Basic' Pocket
Computer
£147.78 + VAT;
Total **£169.95**

Price includes **SECURICOR 24 HOUR DELIVERY***.
Same day despatch, subject to availability.

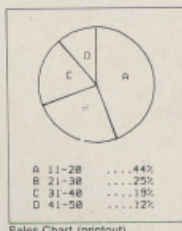
BUSINESS APPLICATIONS



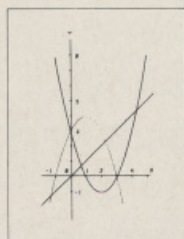
Quick and accurate data processing in daily business. Estimates, records and charts of sales, salaries, invoicing and all other data crucial to efficient business operations can be easily programmed, calculated and summoned.

ENGINEERING APPLICATIONS

Technical calculations in fields such as mathematics, statistics, measurements and mechanics are done superbly and easily. The calculator more than meets the requirements of engineers and scientists.



Sales Chart (printout)



Equational Graph (printout)

MANAGEMENT APPLICATIONS

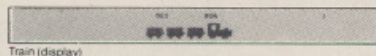
Balance sheets, so crucial to management analysis, and profit calculations by break-even point analysis are instantly yours with the PC-1500. By using the integral clock, calendar and alarm functions, this computer can also be used as a schedule reminder.



Computer Graphic (printout)

HOBBY APPLICATIONS

Many popular computer games can be played, including Blackjack, utilising the random number function. Use the clock and alarm for speed games. The Computer Graphics will draw virtually any pattern.



Train (display)

TEMPUS

38 Burleigh Street, Cambridge CB1 1DG.
Tel: 0223 312866

BASIC LANGUAGE

The most simple computer language is used for programming ease. Additional BASIC terms provide variables including two-dimensional arrays, variable strings and many other advanced features.

LARGE MEMORY

16K bytes of ROM and 3.5K bytes of RAM, with 2.6K bytes in the user area. Adding the optional CE-151, 4K byte memory module, expands the RAM to 7.5K bytes. An 8K byte memory module will be available soon. The PC-1500 is battery powered and program and data memories are fully protected, even when switched off.

MINI-GRAPHIC DISPLAY

The 7 x 156 dot matrix allows almost any display, including game symbols. Line width is 26 characters and/or numbers.

HIGH SPEED DATA PROCESSING

The C-MOS 8-bit CPU enables swift data processing. Complicated technical or business calculations require far less time.

QWERTY TYPEWRITER KEYBOARD

The first in a pocket computer. Lower case letters are available. With the optional CE-150 colour graphic printer, the PC-1500 can serve as a small personal typewriter. Word Processor software will be available soon.

SIX SOFTWARE KEYS

These can serve as reservable keys, or as definable keys to define programs.

CE-150 4-COLOUR GRAPHIC PRINTER/CASSETTE INTERFACE

Automatic program, data and calculation printing. It prints virtually any drawing in either red, black, green, or blue. Characters are printed in nine different sizes and in lines ranging from 4 to 36 digits in length. You can control the printer completely and direct the printing either up, down, left, or right. As a **cassette interface** it will connect up to two cassette recorders, one for data and program storage, the other for their recall. The CE-150 has a built-in rechargeable battery and is supplied with a mains adaptor, type EA-150.

AVAILABLE SOON

* RS-232C interface. * Software board to serve as input keys in graphics, or pictures, previously drawn on a template. * ROM (MASK ROM) module also applicable. * A wide range of business software.

DIMENSIONS

PC-1500: 195Wx25.5Hx86Dmm (7-11/16x1x3-3/8") Wt 375g (0.83lb)
CE-150: 330Wx50Hx115Dmm (13x2x4 inches). Wt 900g (1.98lbs).

Full 12 MONTHS guarantee, with **EQUIPMENT LOAN SERVICE** during downtime.

* **SAME DAY DESPATCH** of orders — Systems by **SECURICOR 24** hour service, (to attended premises only) or by first class registered post. **AT NO EXTRA COST***

SEND FOR FULL DETAILS to **TEMPUS**, the Hand-Held Computer Specialists.

To: **Tempus**, FREEPOST, 38 Burleigh St, Cambridge CB1 1BR.

QTY	ITEM	INFO	PRICE	TOTAL
	PC-1500 Pocket Calculator		£169.95	
	CE-150 Four Colour Printer		£149.95	
	CE-151 4K Byte RAM Module		£ 49.95	
			Total inc VAT	

For information only tick appropriate box

I herewith enclose a cheque or Postal Orders value £ _____
or I wish to pay by Access B'card/Visa.

My number is:

Name:

Address:

MCP
A

The image shows a Casio FX-702P programmable calculator. The LCD display shows 'READY P0: FX-702P' and the number '1680'. The calculator has a numeric keypad and various function keys. The top right corner features the Casio logo and the model name 'FX-702P'. The bottom left corner has a 'RUN' label. The calculator is black with white text and numbers.

AVAILABLE AT SPECIALIST CASIO CALCULATOR OUTLETS.

CASIO ELECTRONICS CO. LTD., UNIT 6, 1000 NORTH CIRCULAR ROAD, LONDON NW7.

R.R.P. £109.95



THE HP-41CV. AN ADVANCED SYSTEM FOR PROFESSIONALS.

Digital Cassette Drive. Up to 131,000 bytes may be stored on one minicassette. This is more than 50 times the basic capacity of your HP-41CV.

All prices include VAT, Postage & Packing.

- HP-41CV £208.75
Card Reader HP-82104A £138.25
Printer HP-82143A £247.25
Extended Function and Memory
Modules HP-82180A £55.05
Extended Memory Module
HP82181A £55.05
HP-IL Module HP-82160A £91.76
Digital Cassette Drive
HP-82161A £356.95
Thermal Printer HP-82162A
(For IL operation only) £321.50
Please tick box of item(s) required

☐ Name _____

☐ Address _____

☐ _____

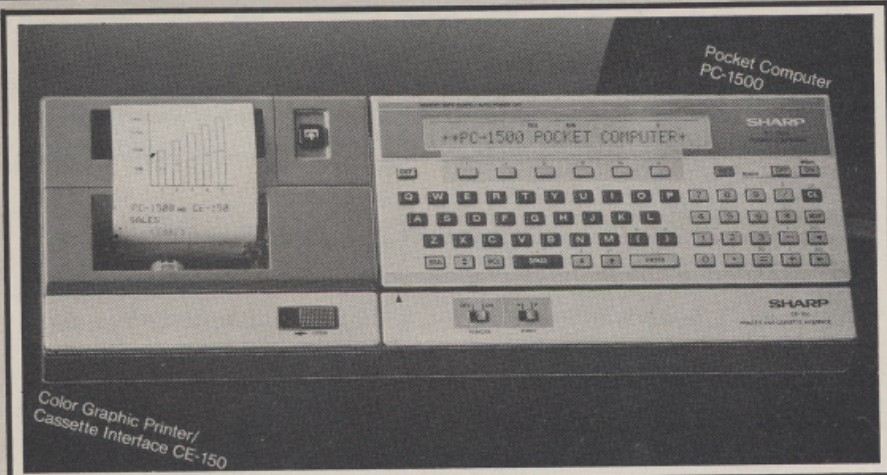
☐ _____

☐ _____

Cut out this coupon and send to:

SUMLOCK BONDAIN LTD.
263-269 City Road, London EC1V 1JX. Tel: 01-250 0505. M

State-of-the-Art Report :



Sharp's brand new PC-1500 with detachable four-colour plotter.

◀ result is that today a tiny single cell can drive a complex combination of electronic circuits for years if necessary – and can then be quickly recharged.

NewBrain

All the bits and pieces were available for a pocket computer shortly after the middle of the last decade. But the first most of us heard about it was in 1980, from two contrasting sources; the National Enterprise Board's own Newbury Labs and the giant Sharp Corporation of Japan (which, as a digression, got its name from its first successful product, a longer-lasting ever-sharp pencil).

Newbury's NewBrain caused something of a sensation when it was launched in the Spring of that year, and deserved the fuss. For here was a portable micro complete with a Z80A, a single-line LCD display, a full QWERTY keyboard, a remarkable number of interfaces, and 32K of RAM expandable to 2M bytes. Even more amazing was that the NewBrain's Basic was provided by a compiler rather than an interpreter.

To be honest, only one of the three models announced was a truly portable computer, and even this one could not be described as a pocket computer unless you are a poacher. But it showed what could be done; in the portable model all the peripheral chips and memory around the Z80 were replaced by CMOS versions of the same products, and the Z80 itself was installed ingeniously so that whenever it was not being used its power supply was cut down to subsistence levels. This is a method of using a standard micro in a pocket machine that we'll come back to later.

A few doubts were expressed at the time about Newbury's ability to make the machines at the stated prices – £199-255 for the various versions – and they turned out to be well founded. Newbury never got the NewBrain into production, the orders that flooded in were never filled, and the whole project was sold off to Grundy last year.

But the second release in that fateful Spring has had a completely different history. It was Sharp's PC-1211, the first real pocket computer if you ignore Hewlett-Packard's

publicity for the HP-41C. (And we'll be coming back to *that* controversy as well.)

Qwerty keyboard

If you haven't seen Isaac Asimov with the Radio Shack (Tandy) Pocket Computer yet – the Tandy version is the Sharp PC-1211 with a TRS-80 label glued on – a brief description might be in order. The thing looks like a stretched and beefed-up calculator, and is actually bigger and heavier than the impression you get from photographs; it measures 7 x 2 3/4 x 3/4 inches, and weighs 6oz. You really can put it in your pocket, though I'd reinforce the lining first. The left-hand section has a QWERTY keyboard of calculator-type keys, complete with 'enter' key, with a 24-character single-line LCD above it. The right-hand bit holds a numeric keypad and some function keys, including two cursor control keys (!).

Inside the sleek metal case, the computer is put together in a far from conventional way. Instead of going for a single-chip micro-

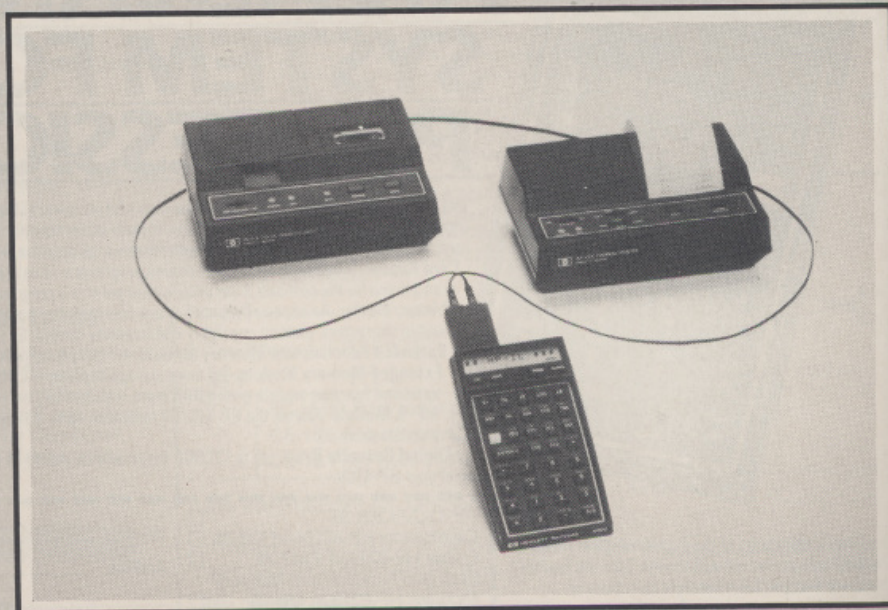
processor, Sharp designed two four-bit CMOS processors which perform different tasks, each including some on-chip ROM. One of the chips reads data from the keyboard or from RAM, sorts out any arithmetic operations, and interprets statements in the machine's Basic language. It then puts an appropriate set of instruction codes into a buffer; the second processor takes these codes out again and does the actual processing work. This second processor also handles the display processing, character generation, and peripheral control – yes, there are peripherals.

As for memory, three CMOS RAM chips each hold 512 bytes, and the three ICs that control the display each have an extra 128 bytes of RAM. Taking away the RAM needed for the processors' instruction buffer, the input display buffers, fixed memories, and other bits and pieces, the user is left with a grand total of 1,424 bytes of RAM to put programs in. You may scoff, but that's 400 bytes more than a ZX-81 gives you, and there is enough room for a number of fairly worthwhile programs.

The Basic used has a few peculiarities; there is no DATA statement, and no multi-dimensional arrays or random number generation. ON...GOTO and ON...GOSUB are also missing, but you can have named sub-routines.

Executive toy

Now the peripherals. Both Sharp and Tandy provide a cassette interface and a combined printer/cassette interface plus printer. Both of these come as plastic units with a slot to fit the Pocket Computer into, which is why the printer interface has to include the cassette interface as well. Using either of these makes the machine a much heftier and more solid proposition, and with the Sharp 16-column, 1 line per second printer attached, the unit is an attractive thing for an executive's desk, next to his Newton's Balls. You couldn't get it



Hewlett-Packard's HP-41C – not really a computer, but sophisticated peripheral handling.

in your pocket, that's for sure.

When it was first seen in the US, at the 1980 West Coast Computer Faire, the general feeling was that the Sharp PC-1211 was a gimmick. The price, around \$275, seemed high for what looked like a souped-up calculator. But sales have gone well, particularly as a result of the Sharp/Tandy deal, and the new Asimov-backed sales push co-incides with a lower price of a shade under \$200. The PC-1211 is advertised in UK magazines as low as £80-£90.

The next big stir came late in 1980, as a result of an odd collaboration between the Japanese giant Matsushita and a T-shirt-and-jeans start-up in San Francisco, tautologously called Friends Amis. Friends Amis, a spin-off from games king Atari, produced a language translator (portable, of course) that was sold by Craig, Quasar and Panasonic in the US. Now, both Quasar and Panasonic are fronts for Matsushita across the Pacific, and the combination of US expertise and Japanese production power soon came up with a product that has been variously called the HHC — hand-held computer, qedditt? — RLH-1000, and The Link.

The difference lies in the processor; the Panasonic/Quasar computer (both firms were to market it in different colours) uses a standard NMOS 6502 running at 1MHz, with a 'power-down' circuit to cut its power consumption. The rest of the electronics is in CMOS, including 2K of RAM expandable internally to 4K and externally to a theoretical limit of 4M bytes; 16K bytes of ROM, with slots for a further 64K and a top capacity of 4M bytes externally; and a built-in real-time clock.

It is when you get to the peripherals that the real power of the machine can be seen. There is a bus expander unit that allows the connection of — take a deep breath — a ROM expander, a RAM expander, a 16-column thermal printer, a 110/300 baud modem, an acoustic coupler, a 1200 bits/s cassette interface, a 16 line x 32 column colour TV interface, and, we are promised, a floppy disk interface.

Attache case

When any combination of these peripherals is connected (and only the TV interface needs its own power supply, so the combination is still portable in a specially-designed attache case) they work by interrupting the processor for service. This avoids slowing the processor down by making it poll non-existent peripherals.

The HHC executes two languages; Basic of course, and a Forth-like language called Snap. These are provided as ROM capsules, using a method developed by Friends Amis for its translators.

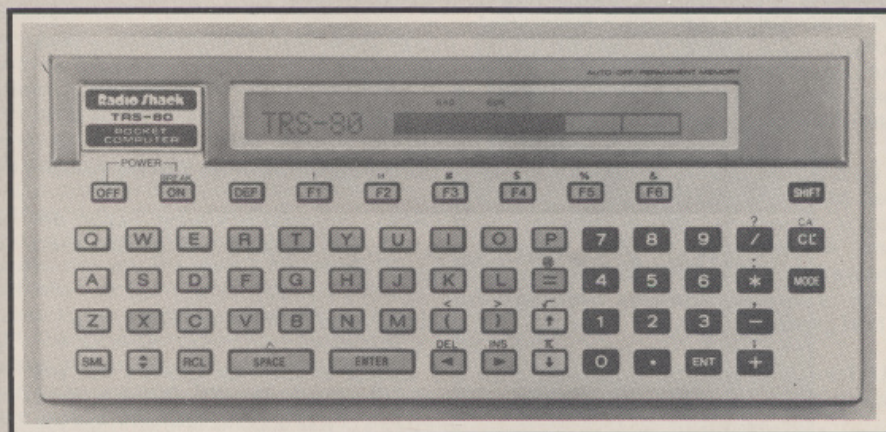
And talk of keyboards brings us to the next contender, from watch and calculator leader-Casio. The name the company has chosen for its pocket computer, fx-702p, shows that it is seen as an extension to the existing calculator range, where the last two type numbers were fx-502p and fx-602p.

The first thing you notice is that the Casio is squarer than the PC-1211 or the HHC, and that it has a keyboard laid out in ABCD... style rather than QWERTY. The display is smaller too, giving only 20 characters. But the numeric pad missing from the Panasonic system is back.

Colour printer

Most interesting of all, Sharp has conjured up a tiny optional printer that can produce graphic plots in *four colours*, green, red, blue, and black. Prices have just been announced at £170 (ex. VAT) for the PC-1500 itself, £150 for the printer/cassette interface (CE-150) and £50 for the 4K add-on RAM.

And the latest thing of all is the entry of Seiko, world's biggest watch-maker and Epson and Seikosha printer giant, into the pocket computer business. Under the Epson name, the HC-20 is so new that just about all I can tell you is the weight—3.5lb—and the US price—around \$750. But I hear that it is very



Tandy's badge-engineered version of the Sharp PC-1211, the first pocket computer.

Although not up to Panasonic levels, the fx-702p has more RAM than the Sharp, 256 bytes more to be precise. The Basic is more 'standard' too, with better array and string handling. And there is also the Sinclair-like feature that each letter key has different functions — a single keystroke gives you a full Basic keyword.

The only interface available to date is the same FA-2 cassette adaptor provided for the fx-602p calculator, once again showing the pocket system's lineage. And the program library consists mainly of scientific programs for the 502p and 602p calculators, translated into Casio Basic. Recommended price is around £135.

And now to get right up to date. In the last month or so two new pocket computers have emerged into the spotlight (if you ignore the much-delayed official launch of the Panasonic HHC). The first is Sharp's second attempt – and so, naturally, Tandy's second bite too – the PC-1500. At the time of writing there was not much detailed information on this contender (as Magnus Magnusson might say), but the esteemed editor of *Micro-Computer Printout* has had one backhanded to him, so expect a fuller report in due course.

From what I can glean, the PC-1500, to be sold as the PC-2 by Tandy, has a new custom 8-bit microprocessor to replace the two four-bit chips of the PC-1211 — but still in CMOS of course. There is an enhanced 12K ROM Basic, and 3.5K bytes of CMOS RAM with an extra 4K as a plug-in option. The full QWERTY keyboard is extended by the addition of six

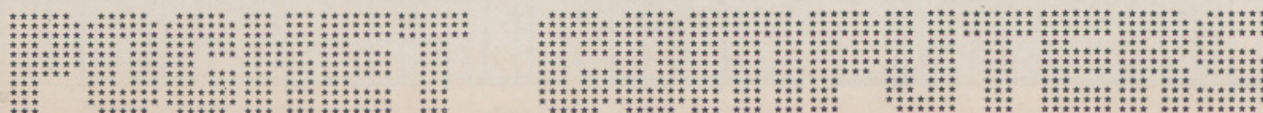
similar in concept to the Sony Typecorder, the typewriter-like keyboard, single-line display, and a micro-cassette drive à la Philips dictation machines.

That is by no means the end of the flood, as companies try to grab a piece of the \$750m market Egil (remember him?) predicted to 1985. And the calculator firms are not giving up either. Hewlett-Packard is now calling its HP-41C, previously just another programmable calculator, a hand-held computer. The company does have a point; magnetic card readers, high-speed mini-cassette recorders, bar code readers, and a thermal printer are available as plug-in extras. Along with an extremely sophisticated ring interface system for connecting them all together.

But we have got to draw the line somewhere, or I would never get this article finished. For instance, what about the TI-59 and other programmables? And what about those portable terminals that squirt data down the phone lines at the end of a salesman's heavy day?

Here I make my stand. To be a hand-held/portable/pocket computer in my book requires a recognised high-level language for the user to program in – say Basic for the sake or argument. Anything else just doesn't make the cut. And so I save myself a lot of further work.

These pocket things, even meeting my criterion, are coming fast. So strengthen those pockets – and remember you read that advice here first.



Computers in

It was the SDP which first got me interested in applying computers to politics. Their idea of using credit cards was so sensible. Other parties send elderly ladies, or men in shabby cardigans, round from door to door collecting subscriptions. There's no way anyone is going to hand over more than 50p at the door. But people will pledge a small fortune over the phone. By the time you regret it, a month later, there's nothing at all you can do about it.

So it should be easy to make the logical leap and use the microcomputer to solve a host of different and difficult political problems. A glance over the ZX81 keyboard reveals that BASIC might have been devised solely for use at Westminster. I have provided a brief glossary:

PLOT: to conspire with others against a political opponent.

UNPLOT: what to do when the press gets hold of the story, e.g. 'It is disgraceful to suggest that I would do such a thing to a valued colleague'.

\$: money

CHRS: old age pensioners' Christmas bonus, always discussed as if it came out of the Minister's own pocket.

GOSUB: give a subsidy to an ailing industry, as in **GOSUB BL \$ 10000000** ('give British Leyland another ten million'). Until last year Sir Keith Joseph's personal key.

LIST: itemise opponent's shortcomings.

LOAD: drink too much in Commons bar while awaiting a vote.

INPUT: drinks consumed in Commons bars while awaiting vote.

LLIST: stutter produced by excessive **LOAD** in Commons bars.

POKE: activity enjoyed in private office while awaiting vote.

SIN: see **POKE**

COS: see above, with more than one person.

SCROLL: impressive looking paper designed to give credibility to otherwise absurd speech.

PAUSE: rhetorical trick designed to ditto.

PI: attempt to convince listeners that you would never be guilty of the heinous transgressions of your opponents when in fact you did exactly the same when you were in office.

SGN: to append your name to a motion which, while you do not agree with it, will cause two hundred of your constituents to write angry letters in green ink if you don't.

IN KEY: what your fingers are after too much **SGN** with a leaky biro.

IN KEY\$: metaphorical, implying 'caught with fingers in the till'.

CLEAR: being defended by the Prime Minister after you have been caught red-handed **IN KEY\$**.

LEN: a rough-hewn, horny-handed, salt-of-the-earth Labour MP.

VAL: a secretary. See **POKE**.

****:** Unparliamentary expression.

" ": useful content of most speeches.

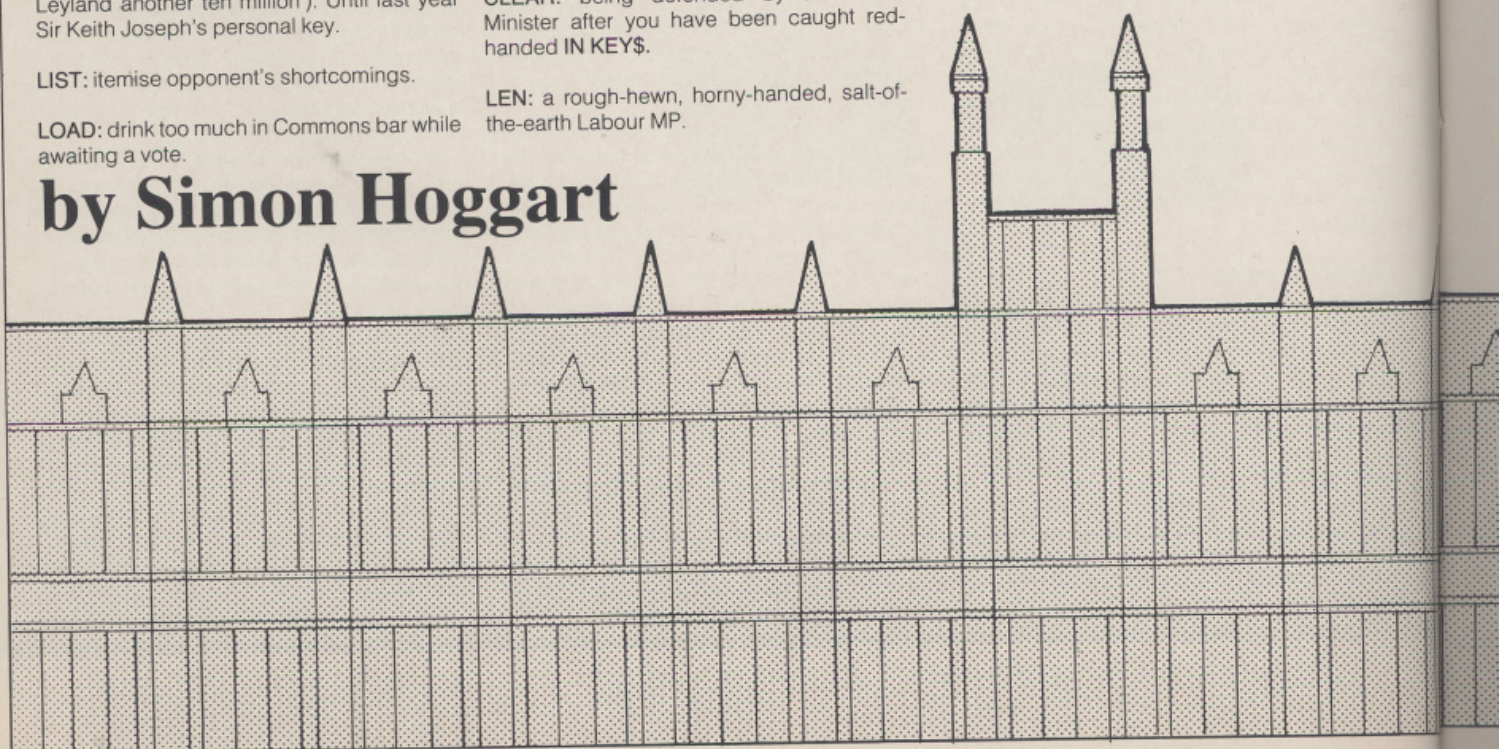
ABS: absent, which many MPs are on Mondays, Fridays, and while on parliamentary delegations to exotic tropical countries.

TAN: result of going on parliamentary delegation to exotic tropical country.

GOTO TAN, POKE, LOAD: purpose of an ideal parliamentary delegation to exotic tropical country.

Now and again, someone suggests using a computer to simplify the voting at Westminster. At the moment, whenever a 'division' is called, all 635 MPs, or however many are present, troop off into the long, book-lined corridors known as 'division lobbies' and shuffle slowly past a clerk sitting at a high desk. He marks off their names on a sheet of paper large enough to cover your sitting room wall, and after everyone has marched past, the result is announced. The whole operation takes about 15 minutes, of which around 14 minutes 55 seconds are spent queueing and five seconds voting. If, as occasionally happens, there are ten or

by Simon Hoggart



n Politics

more consecutive votes on detailed amendments to a bill, an MP can spend three hours doing nothing whatsoever except standing in a queue.

It should be the easiest thing in the world to get this time-wasting process onto a computer so that an MP can sit at his desk or on the green leather benches and not only punch in "Aye" or "No" to the specific question in hand, but tackle such problems as "If Amendment 24 is passed, should we then drop Amendment 25?" or, "If you are against the Bill, would you switch to supporting it if we threw in Amendment 39?"

There's a lot of resistance to this idea, partly because MPs are probably the most tradition-minded people in the country, partly because previous experience elsewhere has been so very discouraging.

Euro glitch

Take the splendid new electronic voting system in the European Parliament building in Strasbourg. It was built by the Italians (like those indicator boards at stations which tell you that the 10.15 train will be going to QWXPBVJW, calling at YTLMFZ) and the plan was that it would flash up the result of each vote within half a second of the last legislator making up his mind. To stop anyone fraudulently casting votes for people who were absent, each MEP (or Member of the European Parliament) was given his own magnetic card. He or she slotted it into the console on the desk, punched 'Yes' or 'No' (or 'Ja' or 'Nein' or whatever) and Bob was your uncle.

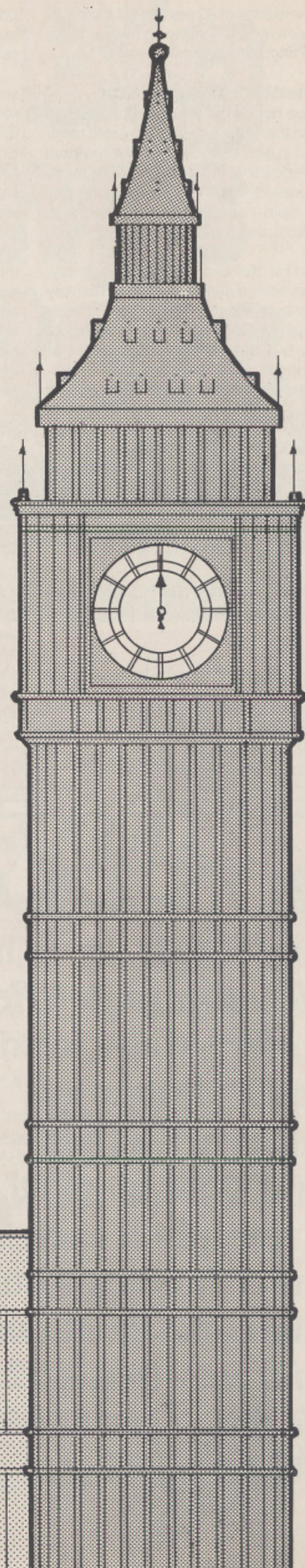
Except that it never actually worked.

Static electricity generated by the carpets (or so they thought; it might have been rubber soles) so confused the computer that it

flashed up a series of random numbers. Votes would have to be re-taken, and a completely different series of numbers appeared. Even when the system had been de-bugged, the losing side only had to claim that the result was unreliable and the vote ought to be taken again – for instance after lunch, when a few of their supporters had got back. And, it appeared, some MEPs were (quite disgracefully) lending their magnetic cards to their friends to vote on their behalf. When a vote was called, a few were dashing from seat to seat, popping in the cards, voting as freely and frequently as an Irish corpse.

So computerisation may not come to Westminster yet. But there's no reason on earth why it shouldn't be used by the political parties in the country – especially by the SDP. The Social Democrats have pledged to consult their membership on more or less every important topic. This is all very well. But there really is little point in asking someone a single question: "Should we ban the bomb?" for instance. "Should we ban the bomb even if the Russians invade Poland?" might be a bit more useful. "Should we ban the bomb even if the Russians invade Poland and it turns out that the Trident missile system is going to cost more than the predicted £5 billions. Or £10 billions. Or £1 trillion?"

For eons now the electors have been asked, in effect, one simple question: do you vote Tory or Labour? And their answer, which often depends on such vague consideration like 'it's time to give the other lot a chance' has been taken by politicians as the excuse to do exactly as they please with the British economy, the country's defence, the educational system, the health service and the problems facing the nation's paperclip industry. It's possible for a Government to go



against the wishes of 90 per cent of the country's population while behaving in a perfectly legitimate and democratic fashion.

Parliamentary Competition

So what we need is a computer program to get around this problem, and we invite readers to send in their suggestions. The program should be devised to work out, in as much detail as possible, the voters' views on one particular topic – defence, taxation, fox-hunting, abortion, the paperclip industry – you name it.

It should be 'menu-driven' – that is to say, offering the voter a series of choices at every stage. It should attempt to find out not only whether the voter is 'for' or 'against' a particular policy, but whether he would be for or against it under a wide variety of different circumstances which might crop up. It should contain as little inbuilt bias as possible – i.e. no questions on the lines of 'would you still be against the Bomb if it meant that hordes of yellow Chinese would overrun us the day after we got rid of it?' You must assume that the actual arguing will be done on TV and in the newspapers during the weeks leading up to the vote. Your job is not to steer people in

one direction or another, but to work out precisely what conclusions they have already reached.

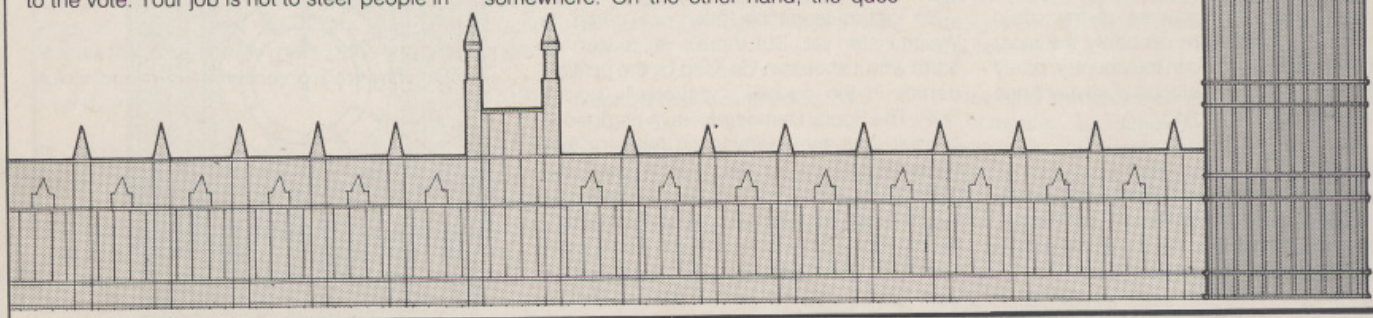
If you have enough memory in your micro, it would be very useful indeed to know how strongly each voter felt about the issue. For example, most opinion polls indicate that the British people think that the Army ought to withdraw from Northern Ireland. Yet because most voters don't feel passionately either way, the Government is under no real pressure to bring them home.

The program ought also to keep a count of the decisions taken by each voter. In other words, it should be easy for the operator to say '62 per cent are against caning in schools, but 73% would be in favour if teachers said it was essential for discipline. Even in these circumstances 84 per cent said it should never be used on girls....' etc.

The program should be as friendly in tone as possible. After all, lots of people are still apprehensive when faced with a keyboard and a video screen, and they have votes too. Probably better not to have the computer address the elector by name, since he might suspect that his views would be recorded somewhere. On the other hand, the ques-

tions should be patiently spelled out and the voters should know that they have as long as they like to answer.

Good luck. The winner will have his or her program printed in *MicroComputer Printout* and will get a luxury parliamentary delegation for two to the West Indies, or Westminster, whichever is the nearer.



DON'T LOSE THIS ISSUE!

Keep it safe in a handsome

MicroComputer Printout

Binder. Made in smart

brown simulation

leather with the

name gold blocked

on the spine, each

binder holds a whole

volume of *MicroComputer*

Printout - that's 12 issues.

The cost - just £3.95 inclusive of U.K. postage.



To: **MicroComputer Printout, P.O. Box 2, Coring, Reading RG8 9LN**
 or telephone 049162-198
 Please rush me a Binder. I enclose Charge my
☐ £3.95 U.K. ☐ £14.50 Eire ☐ £5 Europe
☐ \$6 Overseas ☐ \$12 USA
 NAME:
 ADDRESS:
 POSTCODE:

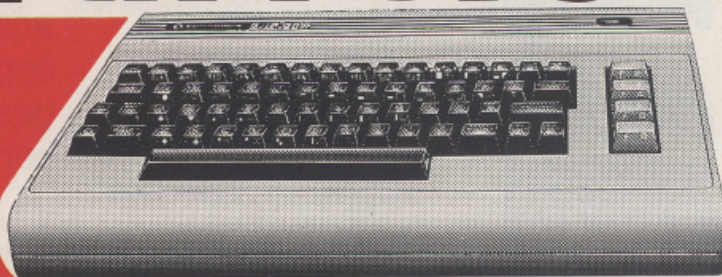
the vic
centre

Big savings for starters

If you're looking for a home computer, you'll already know that the VIC does it all. To help you get started, we have put together this attractive cost-saving package.

VIC-20 Colour computer

- + Cassette Deck
- + 10 Blank Cassettes
- + Introduction to Basic Part 1
- + User Manual



- + 12 months warranty
- + Fitted 13 amp plug

for only
£ 212

(price plus VAT £243.80)

NEW

Convert your VIC to a 40
Column 32k machine with this
exciting new add-on
32k RAM Expansion + 40 column screen format
£199.95 plus VAT
40 column screen format only
£99.95 plus VAT

Dot Matrix Printer

Tractor feed, 80
characters per line at 30
characters/seconds.
£199.96 plus VAT

Memory Expansion Board

Multi-slot unit used to
accept memory and/or
game and program
cartridges
£85.00 plus VAT

Plug-in Memory Expansion

3k - £26.04, 8k - £39.09,
16k - £65.17 plus VAT

Single Drive Floppy Disk Unit
£395.00 plus VAT

The standard features of the Vic are: ★ 5K RAM expandable to 32K ★ 16 screen colours ★ 8 character colours ★ 3 tone generators, each of 3 octaves - plus white noise generator ★ Screen display 22 characters × 23 lines deep ★ Full PET type graphics ★ High resolution graphics capability ★ 8 programmable special functions.

Goods required

Price

Add £4.00 post, packing and insurance for
special deal and £1.00 post, packing and
insurance for all other items. Add 15% to all
prices for VAT

Total £

Name: _____

Address: _____

MAIL ORDER to: Adda Home Computers Ltd.
FREEPOST, London W3 6BR or telephone your
order (24 hours a day) to 01-992 9904 quoting your
Visa, Access or American Express number.

*I enclose a cheque, made payable to Adda Home Computers
Limited for

£
*Please charge my Visa/Access/American Express account. My account
number is

*Please add my name to your mailing list
*Delete as applicable

Date: _____

SHOP ADDRESS: Adda Home Computers Ltd.
154 Victoria Road, Acton, London, W3.
(near North Acton tube station)
Tel 01-992 9904
OPEN: 10am-6pm (Tuesday-Friday),
10am-5pm (Saturday).

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: All goods sold subject to Adda terms and conditions of sale. Full details available on request, but
include: 7 day money back guarantee. Adda 12-month hardware warranty. Please allow 21 days for delivery. Allow 7 days for
personal cheques to be cleared. Quoted prices are exclusive of VAT.

adda

HARDWARE

HOW IT

How does your computer actually work? What are all those small, black chips surrounding the microprocessor and what are they for? **Chris Preston** explains the fundamentals of hardware design in terms the complete beginner can understand.

A quick scan of the computer section of your local bookshop will turn up a vast number of books dealing with programming at all levels. There are not too many books describing hardware which are aimed at a beginner. Even *MicroComputer Printout* is not renowned for its coverage of the subject. This short series of articles aims to put right this lamentable state of affairs. In order to restrict ourselves a little bit though, we will only look at *digital* hardware, which after all is the meat of the computer. All machines do have some *analogue* circuitry to drive the screen and cassette or disk drives. The difference is that in digital circuitry, all the information is carried either as 1's or 0's; analogue information is like sound information: the level of the signal varies continuously between limits.

To most home computer users, what happens under the lid of their machine is a complete mystery. Yet contrary to popular opinion you do not need a degree in electronics to be able to understand the basics of hardware. In fact, as hardware is *completely* logical, it is in many ways a lot easier to understand than software! Nearly all the hardware which goes to make up a computer is composed of building bricks called *gates*. Even the most complex chips are composed of large numbers of gates. If you open the lid of your computer, you will see many chips of all sizes scattered about. The gates we will be looking at first are the small ones with either 14 or 16 legs. On the top of the chip will be a type number beginning with "74", which may be followed by "L" or "LS", which just mean there is a small difference in the chip's power consumption or speed without altering its function. The number ends with another two or three digits which determine the actual type of gate. One package may contain between 1 and 6 gates of a particular type. Here is a very simple gate, called an *inverter*. Its type number is 7404.

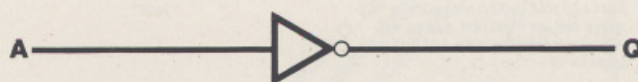


Diagram 1

An inverter has two wires, or lines, associated with it, one *input* which we have called A, and one *output* called Q. As its name suggests, an inverter turns signals upside down. If we

WORKS

send a 1 into an inverter, we get a 0 out; if we feed it with a 0, it gives us a 1. Instead of talking about a line being a 1 or a 0, we often talk about it being true (1) or false (0).

We can describe the action of the inverter in a *truth table*. A truth table is just a diagram which allows us to show what outputs a gate will give us depending upon what inputs we feed into it. Here is the truth table for an inverter:

A	Q
0	1
1	0

This clearly shows that whichever state the input A is in, the output Q is in the opposite state. All this is very well, but exactly what is a '1' and what is a '0'. The two levels are defined by voltages. The normal supply voltage used in a micro is 5v (which is no higher than the output of many domestic batteries), and so we say that if an output is at 5v then the output is a '1'. If the voltage is at zero volts, then the output is a '0'. In practice, however, mass-produced chips are not identical, so we say that anything above about 2.5v is a '1' and anything below 0.5v is a '0'. If the voltage is in between 0.5v and 2.5v then something is seriously wrong, and the inverter will make its own mind as to what is going to appear on the output; we say that the output is undefined; it could be '1' or '0'.

Once we have studied the truth table and understand what an inverter does, we want a shorter way to describe the action of an inverter. When we come to design more complicated circuits, we will want a short concise way of describing the action of a gate. A sort of algebra has been designed to allow us to describe the action of combinations of gates. Using this algebra, we can write the action of an inverter like this:

$$Q = \bar{A}$$

Diagram 2

This is pronounced "Q equals not-A" (not-A meaning the opposite or inverse of A).

What other gates are there? Two other very common gates are the AND gate and the OR gate, but both of these have two inputs instead of one:

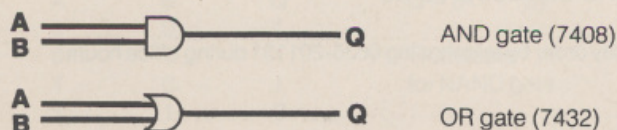


Diagram 3

The action of these gates is equivalent to the BASIC operators AND and OR. The AND gate gives an output if *both* its inputs A and B are 1's. The OR gate output will be true if *either* (or both) of its inputs are true. Here are the truth tables and algebraic definitions for these two gates:

A	B	Q	Q = A B
0	0	0	
0	1	0	
1	0	0	Truth table for AND gate
1	1	1	

A	B	Q	Q = A B
0	0	0	
0	1	1	Truth table for OR gate
1	0	1	
1	1	1	

The two symbols and are very easily confused. The method I have found easiest is that looks like an 'n', which is the middle of aNd. If you can remember this, then must be OR by the process of elimination.

What can we use these gates for? Let us consider a piece of equipment containing a motor. We will not bother ourselves too much about what the equipment is or what it does and only look at features which concern us. In the interests of safety, we want to stop the motor whenever someone opens the door of the equipment. We have a signal from a switch on the door called DOOROPEN which becomes true whenever the door is opened, and a motor controller with an input, MOTORON, which turns the motor on whenever a 1 is applied on the input. In other words, whenever DOOROPEN is true (the door is open), we want to set MOTORON false. This is obviously a case for an inverter:

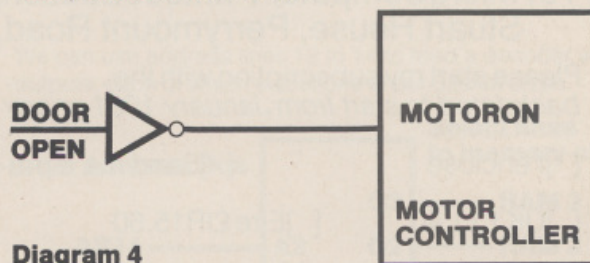
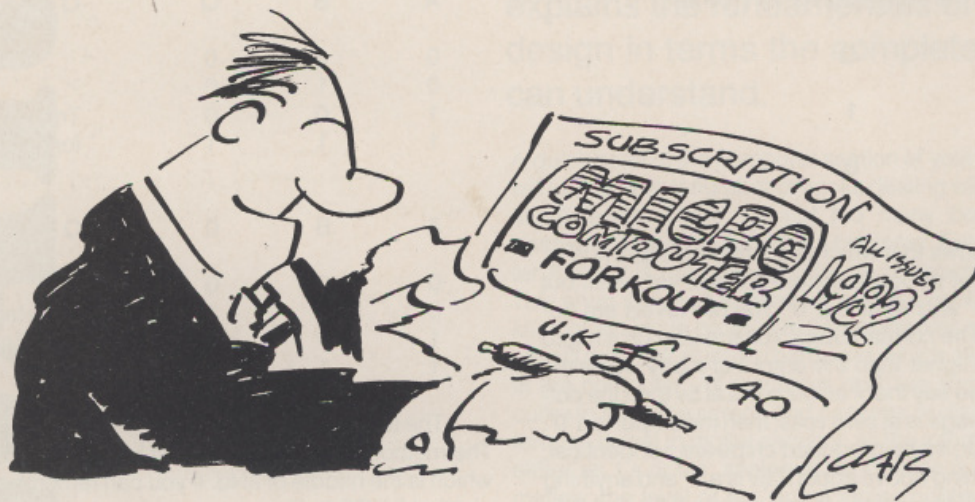


Diagram 4

Now let us add an extra complication. The motor is to be controlled from a time switch, so that it only runs at certain times of the day. The time switch gives us a signal TIMEON which is true when the time switch wants the motor to be turned on. Before we can design a logic circuit to carry out this function, we must be clear about what we want the circuit to do. We can use the algebraic expressions for the gates to do this. We want the output from the circuit, MOTORON, to be

Don't miss out.



-----SUBSCRIBE!-----

To: MicroComputer Printout Subscriptions,
Stuart House, Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath RH16 3DH

Please start my subscription with the issue. (*Subscriptions may be backdated to start from January 1981 or any subsequent issue and back copies sent*)

☐ I enclose : ☐ Send me a pro-forma invoice (*prepayment still required*)

☐ UK £11.40 ☐ Eire £15.60 ☐ Europe £17.40 ☐ USA Airspeeded \$29

☐ Rest of World Airmail £30 ☐ Rest of World surface £16.50

Access/Mastercharge/Eurocard and Barclaycard/Visa holders may order by telephoning 0635-201131 during office hours

NAME..... ADDRESS.....

..... POSTCODE.....

HARDWARE—HOW IT WORKS

true when TIMEON is true and DOOROPEN is false. We can write this:

MOTORON = TIMEON DOOROPEN

In other words, we say "MOTORON equals TIMEON and not DOOROPEN". From this we can develop the following circuit:

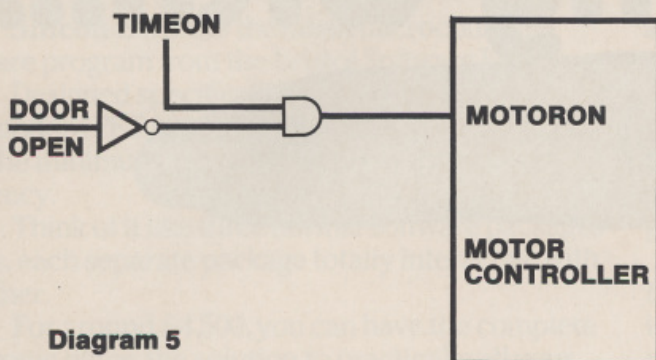


Diagram 5

As an exercise, those of you who are so inclined can add a manual switch, so that an operator can force the motor to be on regardless of what the time switch is saying. The motor should still be turned off if the door is opened, however. Don't fret if you get stuck, we will print the answer in next month's issue.

The three gates we have looked at are in fact all we need to develop any circuit which just involves looking at the level of various inputs and producing a number of outputs. The word for this kind of circuit is 'combinational' or 'combinatorial' depending on where you were educated! Several arrangements of more than one gate crop up again and again, and so chip manufacturers also produce chips to carry out these functions, to save us a bit of trouble. One of these, the Exclusive-OR, is also a BASIC operator.

Here is its truth table:

A	B	Q	Q = A B
0	0	0	Truth table for exclusive-OR gate (7486)
0	1	1	
1	0	1	
1	1	0	

From this we can see that the output Q is true, if A or B, but *not both*, is true, that is Q is true if A and B are different. See if you can design a circuit using the basic three gates, AND, OR and NOT to produce an exclusive-OR gate.

Two more gates will complete our list. The first is the NAND gate, 7400, which is just an AND gate followed by an inverter:

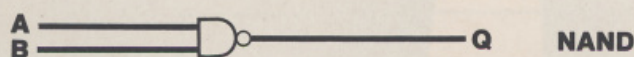


Diagram 6

A	B	Q	Q = (A B)
0	0	1	Truth table for NAND gate
0	1	1	
1	0	1	
1	1	0	

Notice that the column under "Q" in the truth table can be worked out by applying an invert operation to the "Q"-column of the AND gate.

The second new gate is the NOR gate, 7402, which is an OR gate followed by an inverter:

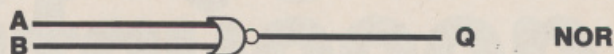


Diagram 7

See if you can work out its truth table from those of the inverter and OR gate.

We will now look at a chip which contains quite a large number of gates. It is called a decoder, 74138, and is used in pretty well all computers. A typical device may have 3 inputs (A0 to A2) and 8 outputs (Q0 to Q7):

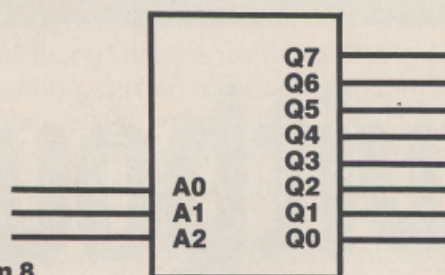


Diagram 8

The way this device works is really quite simple. If we think of the 3 input lines as forming a binary number in the range 0 (000) to 7 (111), then each number causes the corresponding output to be true. For example if A0=0, A1=1 and A2=1, this forms the number 110, that is 6, so output Q6 will be true. The most common use for this device is in selecting different parts of memory. The memory of our computer may be composed of a number of RAM chips, each 4 kbytes big. Each RAM chip will contain 4096 memory addresses, that is \$1000 in hexadecimal. When the processor wants to access memory location \$2000 or \$3000, we need to select RAM2 or RAM3 respectively. By feeding the correct bits of the address into a decoder chip, we can use the outputs to select the correct RAM chip. Each RAM chip contains \$1000 elements, 0 to \$FFF, so we will need 12 address lines going to each chip, A0 to A12. If we think of the address as a 16 bit binary number, we can easily see which lines we need:

15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
				3		0				0					0

We can use address lines 12 to 14 to feed a decoder with 8 outputs, each of which select one of our 8 RAM chips.

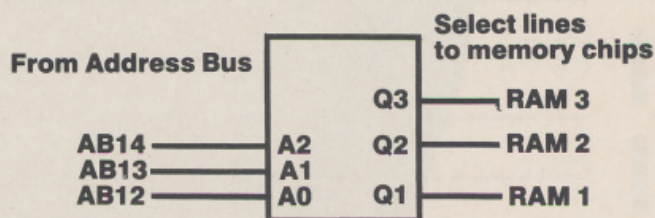


Diagram 9

This is a good example of how much easier it is to work in hexadecimal when dealing with the nuts and bolts of computing! Next month we will be looking at how the different parts of a computer, processor, memory etc. are linked by the various buses.

Now you can do all accounting with...



without...



the filing, typing and

Silicon Office is the latest microcomputer software program from the Bristol Software Factory.

Designed specifically for use with the Commodore PET 8096, it'll help you run your office with the minimum amount of effort and maximum efficiency.

Think of it like three normal software packages in one, each separate package totally interactive with the other.

For around £4,500, you can have the complete electronic office, the solution to practically all your business problems. The price includes Commodore hardware, a high quality daisy wheel printer and Silicon Office software.

Silicon Office is made up from a flexible information management system which lets you create and maintain an extensive filing arrangement. Allowing you to search quickly through your records, making cross references between files in order to gain the facts you require.

A highly sophisticated word processing program allows you to generate letters, documents and reports. Letting secretaries get on with the more important tasks.

And a fully comprehensive calculator means you can handle all the number crunching you're ever likely to do in a business situation. Leaving the

accounts department to concentrate on more profitable things.

But that's not all by any means.

Silicon Office also has a special programmability feature which means you or your dealer can expand and tailor the Silicon Office program to your business.

When Silicon Office is used in an everyday business situation, certain command sequences are inevitably repeated. By writing short, very simple programs which are entered into the computer's memory, Silicon Office can perform the necessary tasks, automatically.

And last, but by no means least is an optional communications facility.

It doesn't take much imagination to see the potential of Silicon Office in virtually any line of business.

So to get a better grasp, send away for our brochure. It'll only cost you a stamp. And it could save you a fortune. Or talk to your local Commodore dealer who has all the facts at his fingertips.

You'll soon see how you're much better off with Silicon Office. Than without.

 **commodore**
COMPUTER



I can't wait to get my hands on a free copy of the Silicon Office brochure.

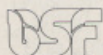
Name _____

Position _____

Company _____

Address _____

I own a Commodore PET (Please tick box) YES ☐ NO ☐



Send to: Bristol Software Factory, PO Box 14, Horley, Surrey.

SILICON OFFICE

Can I upgr

Dear Sir,

I am considering the purchase of a microcomputer, possibly BBC Model B or equivalent, but am unable to find out whether it would be suitable for tasks I have in mind for the future. Your magazine invites "confused" readers to write to you, hence this letter.

Initially I intend using the computer for learning to program, games, etc., but as my practice grows I will want to use it for accounting-book-keeping services to my clients (ledgers, wages), production of accounts from incomplete records and word processing.

I should be grateful if you would let me know whether it would be possible to expand, say the BBC B, with the addition of disk drives, printer etc. so as to be able to handle the above tasks. And if so, would it be advisable to do so or would it be better to opt for a business system from the outset.

I am fairly new to computing and what little I know about computers is largely due to your magazine. I look forward to your reply.

D. M. Gudka,
Woodview,
Thorrington,
Essex, CO7 8JL

First of all, Mr Gudka, I'd like to commend you for your wisdom in asking this question *before* deciding which computer to buy! *MicroComputer Printout's* "confused" advertisement has resulted in a deluge of letters being passed to me by the Editor, primarily asking the same question: Which computer should I buy?

by David Eldridge

It has been an interesting exercise grading these letters into different groups, and I will be dealing with all of the most common misunderstandings and difficulties over the next few issues, so keep 'em coming!

One of the most frequent misconceptions arises because the newcomer is unaware of the difference between a home microcomputer and a business microcomputer.

Reasons for this are manifold. First, quite a few microcomputers can successfully be used in either environment. Furthermore, several of today's more popular business systems have their historical roots planted firmly in the home and education market sectors. PET, Apple and Tandy TRS-80 all come to mind as good examples from the days when a lack of peripherals and sophisticated software meant that business applications required a lot of hard work – and knowledge – on the part of the user.

The situation has been further complicated by the introduction of mass-market low-cost home computers, some promoted with the aid of distinctly dubious

advertising claims relating to their suitability for business use.

In previous columns, I have gone into detailed explanations as to what can and cannot be stored in a home computer's memory; where cassette is applicable; and when disks are mandatory (the case for most business uses). The end conclusion is invariably that while a machine such as the ZX81 is excellent for learning to program on, it cannot realistically run commercial applications.

Memory capacity

You, however, clearly recognise the difference between home and business computers, and are asking a far more fruitful question: Can a home computer with good expansion facilities be upgraded to compete with a business system?



Can I buy a BBC computer to learn programming, and then add peripherals for business, later.....

To answer this, I must first outline where the two types of computer differ and where they are similar. Both, for example, can be based on the same microprocessor (usually a 6502 or Z-80) and hence can process at comparable speeds. Differences in RAM memory capacities are not great, either: the better home computers will usually yield up to 32K bytes, and while some business machines have 48K, 64K or more, a large chunk of this is used *instead of ROM* to house the language or operating system. Though the trend now is towards more businesslike languages, notably Pascal and COBOL, most home *and* business computing is still done using BASIC.

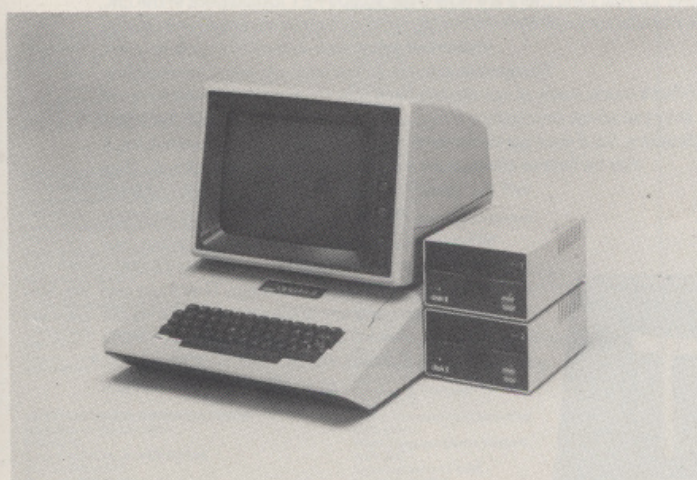
A business BASIC will contain commands relating to storage of information on disk, whereas BASICs in home computers major on the handling of colour, graphics and sound (though BBC BASIC copes admirably with both). Keyboards are similar in functions, as are screen sizes. A business computer will opt for the maximum number of columns, though, again, the BBC B scores well with 80. So

Which computer should I buy?

Trade, later?

where do they differ?

It should be stated that considered purely as a CPU (i.e. a computer without peripherals), home computers these days offer far better value for money than business computers. They have colour, sound, graphics, plug-in cartridges and interfaces for joysticks, light pens and all manner of other goodies. This is primarily because purpose-built home computers are a more recent development and have taken advantage of advances in technology – particularly in the area of video/sound controller chips and the use of Uncommitted Logic Arrays and related devices to replace the myriad of discrete but unsophisticated logic circuits previously required. Compare, for example, the BBC with the PET, Apple and Tandy – all of which have changed little over the past four years.



..... or should I buy a business system from the outset?

New, purpose-designed business computers are now starting to appear on the market which make use of up-to-date technology. The Sirius 1 (*see feature last issue – Ed*) is likely to set the trend for developments over the next two years. But why are the PET, Apple and Tandy's still selling?

Peripherals

One answer is peripherals: business systems are more likely to have peripherals designed for business use. The disks have higher capacities and the disk operating systems (DOS) can handle the kind of record structure best suited to commercial transactions. (This is not always true, however, as the capacity of a single drive disk can be anything from 90K to 1.2MB). Printers are faster, have more readable typefaces, and are of a more rugged design. And of course when buying a business system, it is a decided advantage not to have to purchase each component from a different supplier.

Yet this distinction is fading rapidly. Modern home

computers (the BBC B included) have RS232 interfaces that enable them to drive *any* printer of your choosing, and the Commodore VIC can drive all of the sophisticated PET peripherals.

Physical design, though, remains a valid, but often overlooked, distinction – both from the viewpoint of reliability and ergonomics (convenience of use by operator). Under the first heading, an all-in-one or integrated design is going to stand up to prolonged use better than one which relies on an external power supply, UHF modulator and a host of interconnected add-ons resembling Spaghetti Junction. There is, however, a great deal of controversy as to whether built in disk drives are a boon or bane.

Good ergonomic design is rare on all but the latest generation of computers – outside the advertising slogans but, generally speaking, a business computer will have a better laid out keyboard with good 'feel', and a sharper screen display that is less likely to induce operator eyestrain.

Software

But far and away the most important difference is software: indeed, the best axiom for selecting a business system is to look first for the software package(s) to meet your requirements, and then see which hardware it will run on. Generally speaking, the larger the installed user base of any one system the greater the range and quality of business software available for it. Which is why the PET, Apple and Tandy still do so well, not to mention the others (*see Which Business System, this issue – Ed*). Even given sufficient time, the most popular home computers are unlikely to catch up; because most development emphasis will be in the fields of entertainment and education.

There is one way in which a home computer can access a whole library of business packages, and that is via the standard operating system, CP/M. Certainly, there are some excellent word processors and Calc programs that will run on any CP/M machine (which usually means one with a Z-80 microprocessor and 64K of RAM). However, programs written under CP/M generally can't take advantage of the individual features of a particular machine, such as programmable function keys and good screen layouts. Hence some of the most user-friendly and powerful programs are written only for one particular machine.

So much for the generalities; now let's look briefly at how well the BBC B machine could be upgraded to a business system. Though based on a 6502 microprocessor, the design incorporates a clever system called 'The Tube' which allows processing to be passed to an external processor. The manufacturers are planning to produce a Z-80 device (which would run CP/M) and one to run Motorola's powerful 16-bit processor, the 68000. So given time, the BBC micro will be able to run a certain amount of existing software, though I would doubt that much will be developed specifically for this machine, at least in the ►

IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING WORDS GIVE YOU A BUZZ . . . ANALYSIS STATISTICS DESIGN PLOTTING GRAPHICS REPORT WRITING SPECIFICATIONS SCHEDULES COSTING PLANT MAINTENANCE PRODUCTION CONTROL SIMULATIONS IEEE INTERFACING INSTRUMENT CONTROL MONITORING TERMINAL COMMUNICATIONS PAPERTAPE READING PUNCHING & EDITING SELF PROGRAMMING BASIC ASSEMBLER LANGUAGE MACHINECODE... **GIVE US A BUZZ (OR SEND BACK THE COUPON)**

The micro comes of age. The PET has come a long way since micros were regarded as toys. It's designed and built for demanding work and this shows in the 32K memory and 80 column screen as well as in its impressive disk capacity. When it comes to languages, you'll find the PET fluent in BASIC, PASCAL, FORTH, COMAL, LISP, PILOT, FORTRAN, APL and ASSEMBLER.

It can be used as a complete system in itself, or can be linked to other PETs or a mainframe.

Who needs PET? And why? The list above speaks for itself, but that's only part of the story as the PET now has over 600 applications. It's good news for any engineer who's tried to get even a modest budget approved – the PET is very acceptable to the most sceptical of money people.

It's an attractive proposition, too, to DP professionals who need their fingers on the pulse and are fed up with waiting for their turn on the company computer.

In fact, it's the nearest thing to the all-purpose computer for everyone. An extravagant claim? A demonstration can prove it to be true.

The PET has track record. We've been involved with electronics for over 20 years and there are now over 30,000 PET installations in the UK. We manufacture our own microchip which is happily accepted and used by makers of other well-known microcomputers.

You get nationwide dealer back-up with Commodore. What's more, many of our dealers have specific expertise – which means they can advise on anything from business systems to specialist technical applications. So, if your particular problem is of a highly specialised nature, it may be best to contact our Information Department direct. They will then recommend the dealers who understand – and who speak your kind of language.

What does all this cost? Not a lot. In fact, our computers start at £200 and go through to £8,000 – which will buy you a business system. That's just one more reason why any professional worth his salt would be interested in a microcomputer that's made its name in the business world . . . but is far more than just an efficient business brain.



Send to: Commodore Information Services,
675 Ajax Avenue, Slough, Berks. Tel: Slough 79292
I'd like to know how Commodore could make choosing a
computer simple for me.



Name _____ Position _____
Nature of Business _____
Company _____
Address _____
Tel. _____

12MR3

COMMODORE PET
Quite simply, you benefit
from our experience

**Come and see us at the Third International
Commodore Computer Show
3rd-5th June, Cunard Hotel, Hammersmith**

Commodore Official Dealer List

LONDON

Adda W13
01-579 5845
Capital Computer Systems W1
01-436 3863
Logic Computer Systems SW1
01-222 1122/5492
Merchant Systems Ltd EC4
01-583 6774
Micro Computation N14
01-882 5104
Microcomputer Centre SW14
01-878 7044/7
Sunlock Bondain Ltd EC1
01-250 0905
Informex-London Ltd SE13
01-318 4213/7
CSS (Systems) Ltd E8
01-254 9293
Meares Consultants Ltd NW3
01-431 3410
Data Base NW2
01-450 1388

SURREY & MIDDLESEX

Douglas Moore Ltd Kingston-Upon-Thames
01-549 2121
Micro Facilities Ltd Hampton Hill
01-979 4546/941 1197
PPM Ltd Woking
04867-80111
Datalect Computers Ltd Croydon
01-680 3581
Datalect Computers Ltd Woking
04862-25995
Johnson Microcomputers Camberley
0276-20446
Wego Computers Ltd Caterham
0883-49235
Cream Computer Shop Harrow
01-863 0833
Da Vinci Computer Shop Edgware
01-952 0526
L & J Computers Stanmore
01-204 7525/206 0440

KENT, SUSSEX & HAMPSHIRE

Amplicon Micro Systems Brighton
0273-562163/608331
Business Electronics Southampton
0703-738248
HSV (Microcomputers) Ltd Hants
0256-62444/0703-331422
Milhouse Designs Ltd Alton
042-084517
The Computer Room Tonbridge
0732-355962
Scan Computers Storrington
09066-5432

ESSEX

Dataview Colchester
0206-865835
CSSC Ltd Ilford
01-554 3344
DCM Brentwood
0277-229379
Stuart R Dean Ltd Southend-on-Sea
0702-62707

BERKSHIRE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, OXFORDSHIRE & WILTSHIRE

Commodore Business Systems Ltd High Wycombe
0494-40116
Orchard Computer Services Wallingford
0491-35529
Wymark Micro-Computer Centre Salisbury
04254-77012
AlphaScan Ltd Banbury
029575-8202
J.R. Ward Computers Ltd Milton Keynes
0908-562850
The Computer Shop Oxford
0865-722872
Kingley Computers High Wycombe
0494-449749

HERTFORDSHIRE & BEDFORDSHIRE

Alpha Business Systems Ware
0920-68926
Bromwell Data Services Old Hatfield
07072-60980/63295
Computer Plus Watford
0922-33927
H-B Computers (Luton) Ltd Luton
0582-454666
Photo Acoustics Watford
0923-40698/32006
MMS Ltd Bedford
0234-40601
Brent Computer Systems Rickmansworth
87-71306/70329

EAST MIDLANDS, SOUTH HUMBERSIDE & DERBYSHIRE

Davidson Richards Ltd Derby
0332-366803/4
Roger Clark (Business Systems) Ltd Leicester
0533-20455
Arden Data Processing Leicester
0533-22255
Betas Systems Ltd Nottingham
0602-48108
Caddis Computer Systems Ltd Hinckley
0455-613544

EAST ANGLIA, LINCOLNSHIRE & NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Arden Data Processing Peterborough
0733-47767
HB Computers Ltd Kettering
0536-520910
Sunlock Bondain Ltd Norwich
0603-26259/614302
Dataview Norwich
0603-616221

WEST MIDLANDS, STAFFORDSHIRE & WARWICKSHIRE

Joseph Ware Associates Birmingham
021-643 8033
Camden Electronics Ltd Birmingham
021-773 8240
Micro Associates Birmingham
021-328 4574
Taylor Wilson Systems Dorridge, Solihull
05645-6192
Walters Computer Systems Ltd Stourbridge
03843-70811

CBS Consultants Ltd Birmingham

021-772 8181
Peach Data Services Burton-on-Trent
0283-44968
Computer Services Midlands Ltd Birmingham
021-382 4171
Business Equipment Rentals Ltd Rugby
0788-45754
Business Equipment Rentals Ltd Coventry
0203-20246

NORTH WALES, CHESHIRE & MERSEYSIDE

Rockliff Micro Computers Mold
0352-59629
North Wales Computer Services Colwyn Bay
0492-33151
Office & Business Equipment (Chester) Ltd Queensferry
0244-816803
Catsands Information Systems Wilmow
0625-527166
Rockliff Micro Computers Liverpool
051-521 5830
Stack Computer Services Bootle
051-933 5511

MANCHESTER

Cytak (UK) Ltd Old Trafford
061-872 4682
Executive Reprographic Manchester
061-228 1637
Sunlock (Manchester) Ltd Manchester
061-834 4233
D Kipping Salford
061-834 6367/9
Computare Ltd Manchester
061-832 4761

LANCASHIRE

Preston Computer Centre Preston
0772-57684
Thermon Ltd Burnley
0282-813299

YORKSHIRE & HUMBERSIDE

Ackroyd Typewriter Co Ltd Bradford
0274-31835
Alcor Computer Systems Ltd Huddersfield
0484-512352
Deans Computer Services Leeds
0532-452966
Holbrook Business Systems Sheffield
0742-484466
Holdene Ltd Leeds
0532-459459
Microware Computers Hull
0482-562107
Mitre Finch Fishergate
0904-52995
Yorkshire Electronics Morley
0532-522181
Computer Centre (Sheffield) Ltd Sheffield
0742-53519/588731
Microprocessor Services Hull
0482-23146
Ram Computer Services Ltd Bradford
0274-391166

NORTH EAST

Currie & Maughan Gateshead
0632-774540
Dysons Instruments Houghton-Le-Spring
0783-260452
Intex Datalog Ltd Eaglescliffe
0642-781193
Key Computer Services Ltd Jesmond
0632-815157

AVON, WALES & WEST COUNTRY

Calculator Services & Sales (Bristol) Ltd Bristol
0272-779452/3
Computer Supplies (Swansea) Sketty
0792-290047
McDowell Knaggs & Associates Worcester
0905-28466
Somerset Business Computers Taunton
0823-52149
Milequip Ltd Gloucester
0452-411010
Reeves Computers Ltd Carmarthen
0267-32441/2
Welsh Computer Centre Bridgend
0656-2757
Sigma Systems Ltd Cardiff
0222-21515/34869
Reeves Computers Newport
0633-212331/2
Computer Shack Ltd Cheltenham
0242-584343
Midland Micro Stourport-on-Severn
02993-77098/6706
Sunlock Taldow Ltd Bristol
0272-27685/6
Radon Computational Ltd Bath
0225-318483

DEVON & CORNWALL

AC Systems Exeter
0392-71718
Devon Computers Paignton
0803-526303
Jeffrey Martin Computer Services Ltd Truro
0872-71626
AC Systems Plymouth
0752-260861
JAD Integrated Services (Plymouth) Ltd Plymouth
0752-662616/29038

SCOTLAND

Ayrshire Office Services Ltd Kilmarnock
0563-24255/20551
Holdene Microsystems Ltd Edinburgh
031-557 4060
Roblox Office Equipment Ltd Glasgow
041-221 8413/4
Gate Microsystems Ltd Dundee
0382-28194
Gate Microsystems Ltd Glasgow
041-221 9372
Mac Micro Ltd Inverness
0463-712774

EIRE & NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland Computer Centre Co. Down
02317-4548/9
Crowley Computers Ltd Dublin 2
0001-600681

ISLE OF MAN

Resource Planning Ltd Douglas
0624-4247/8

Can I upgrade, later?

immediate future.

The story on peripherals is similar. Almost any printer can be attached and a comprehensive range of other devices is 'under development'. To date, however, there is little clue as to the capacity and arrival date of, say, the floppy disk.

Physical design

On physical design, the BBC begins to fall down. The casing is rather large for desktop use – particularly as the T.V. screen or monitor cannot be stood on top, and all the peripherals, external processors and so forth will make for a cluttered desktop.

So what is my advice? If you aren't completely sure about going into microcomputing, Mr Gudka, buy the BBC machine and have fun learning to program using its extensive graphics and sound capabilities. After a few months, you will soon know if you can live with its design as a business system, and should by then have a better idea as to what peripherals are available.

Don't, however, fall into the trap of assuming you *must* upgrade the system you've bought. The BBC B will cost you £400, any business system (upgraded or dedicated) is going to be nearer the £1500-£2000 mark. So it might be cheaper to sell the BBC and purchase a full business system when you are ready.

If, however, you are committed to computing then buy a PET or Apple (without disks), first, and add the appropriate peripherals as you need them. They are both perfectly good for learning to program on – though of course you won't have the sophisticated colour and graphics.

One final word of warning. Your letter suggests that you intend to write your own business software. Don't underestimate the work involved. The better packages now appearing have many man-months or years of work behind them. Unless you have a really novel application in mind, I suggest that you would be much better off looking at existing packages than writing your own. The functions you mentioned are all heavy-weight applications, requiring very sophisticated programming to run efficiently on a micro.

All the more reason why you should really be looking at a business system from the start.

If you are thinking of buying a microcomputer for a particular application and would like advice through this column, we invite you to send us details. We also welcome correspondence from existing owners regarding their experiences of buying or using any machine.

HAVE YOU MOVED?

If you are moving house, please be sure to let us know your new address so that your copies of *MicroComputer Printout* can be redirected. It would be helpful if you could enclose your previous wrapper.

TEXAS

Texans, as followers of 'Dallas' will know, do things big.

Despite this the TI99/4A from Texas Instruments has made only a small impact here.

Richard Pawson

discovered an inexpensive computer, well supported with peripherals and software, that's being sold in a totally different way to its competitors.



Newly-launched TI Invaders are 'merely aggressive' or 'downright nasty'!

In order for a new microcomputer to establish itself in the marketplace, it has to be well-supported. When most machines are first launched, however, they are supported not by programs and peripherals, but merely by nebulous promises. "We have an extensive programme of software development under way. Floppy disk and printer are scheduled for next autumn, with a modem to follow," is the usual line. So when a machine is launched, complete with disk, modem, interfaces, memory expansion, printer and a goodly range of cassette, disk and cartridge software already available – that alone bears examination.

The TI99/4A from Texas Instruments is a case in point; perhaps *the* case in point. Launched last September at a price of £299 including VAT, the 99/4A is aimed directly at the home computer market – with excellent colour, graphics and sound. One of the most refreshing things is that the manufacturer has made no attempt to pretend that it can be used for business. TI have not developed the useless (and we use the word advisedly) Payroll and Accounting packages which other home computer manufacturers seem to view as a priority.

Conservative marketing

So with the TI now establishing its distribution amongst computer shops and national department stores it is surprising to find that sales have been only 'moderate'. This can be put down in part to TI's rather conservative marketing techniques (compared with the kind of enthusiasm whipped up by Commodore's new product 'leaks' and the BBC Microcomputer), but the main cause is an historical one.

The TI99/4 was first launched nearly two years ago – intended for the US home computer market. Over here, it needed an American standard colour monitor to achieve the colour graphics, putting the total price up to £1,000.

"Obviously the price tag made the 99/4 less attractive," says Mike Lunch, General Manager of TI's UK Consumer Products Division, "but in many ways the machine was ahead of its time. Two years ago personal computing was firmly in the hands of enthusiasts. The 99/4's strong points – colour, graphics, sound and plug-in cartridges – were criticised by many as being unnecessary. Now the other manufacturers have identified the home market, they have all followed suit!"

The new 99/4A, however, not only has a PAL interface to drive any UK colour T.V., but sports an improved typewriter-like keyboard and a number of other minor improvements. Those who are familiar with Texas Instruments will be aware of their reputation of quality in every department: construction, design, reliability, documentation and packaging. The 99/4A clearly reflects the company's twin roots: programmable calculators at one extreme and minicomputers at the other. In some features this design origin works to its credit, and in others detrimentally.

One of the greatest strengths of the TI is in its expansion – the peripherals mentioned earlier. It should be pointed out, however, that while the quality of construction is excellent and the specification functional, the units are all relatively expensive and one of them

particularly "outstanding". The disk controller costs £200, and then a further £300 for each drive unit, for example. The strength is that a complete system can be purchased from one manufacturer. "It's like the camera market," maintains Mike Lunch, "the most common reason for purchasing an SLR is that it can be expanded with a vast range of lenses, wide angle to telephoto. Yet the average number of lenses bought by an SLR owner is only one and a half."

Clearly, most users will stick with the basic 99/4A, using cassettes and cartridges.

Professional use

Those who have a professional use in mind will purchase a complete system – taking the price well beyond £1,000. This includes the programmer who wishes to develop machine code for the 16-bit TMS9900 microprocessor on which the machine is based – since machine code cannot be accessed without disk and memory expansion.



Twin joysticks, or 'wired controllers' as TI have it....

In our article on Computers of the Future (November 1981), Guy Kewney coined a new phrase: The Convivial Computer. This referred to a machine where the manufacturer makes available all possible system documentation about a machine, thereby encouraging independent suppliers to develop software, peripherals, and the formation of user groups to exchange ideas, information and programs. The TI99/4A is *not* a convivial computer – there is no system-level documentation, nor is there any means of accessing the machine at system level. The lack of PEEK, POKE and SYS commands would leave the experienced enthusiast feeling straight-jacketed – unable to explore and find new tweaks and tricks.

Yet in TI's case this is clearly policy, rather than the more usual reason: incompetence. The machine is aimed at the typical home user who wants to use primarily off-the-shelf packages and perhaps to write a few programs himself – whence the easy-to-use BASIC.

The evaluation below is conducted along the same lines as our *Which Home Computer?* feature in the February issue, but examining each area in more detail. Our test system, which was in use for four weeks, did include all the peripherals – though we have not covered them individually in the evaluation for reasons of space.

Physical Construction

Under this heading we refer both to quality of

construction and convenience of design, and, not surprisingly, the TI scores well in both. The computer itself is solid, attractively finished in silver and black, and of a size that makes it equally suitable for use on a desk-top, on the floor in front of the telly, or the position most favoured by our boffins: placed across the knees whilst lounging in a deep armchair.

The rugged quality of all connectors for peripherals and expansion give considerable reassurance compared with those of cheaper competitors – where the PCB edge-connectors are prone to both dust and corrosion from 'sticky fingers'. This is particularly true of the arrangements for inserting ROM cartridges or 'solid state software' as the label on the front grandiosely portrays it. The use of a recessed well to guide the cartridge in, and spring loaded doors to protect the connectors was far more satisfactory than some of the other mechanisms we have encountered.

The only thing to mar the configuration was the need for a (bulky) mains transformer and separate UHF modulator (also large) outside the main casing, similar in this respect to Commodore's VIC. For desktop use, these units could be well hidden, but installed on the lounge floor or coffee table made for a rather messy layout.

Both the exterior design and ruggedness are mirrored in the various peripherals – with the exception of the steel-encased disk drive which looks as though it has been bought-in ready assembled from another manufacturer.

The peripherals connect directly together by means of an expansion bus which passes through each device. This eliminates the need for myriad interconnection cables, though each major unit still requires its own mains supply.

However, by the time you have added speech synthesiser, expansion memory, RS232 interface, disk (with controller) and printer, the system is beginning to reach unmanageable proportions. Texas have foreseen this problem and at time of going to press, we learned of their intention to market a 'rack' system with common power supply, into which various peripherals could be plugged, as cards.

It should be remembered, though, that the TI is marketed firmly as a home computer, and though well-supported with peripherals, few installations are likely to upgrade to the full system.

Keyboard

First impression of the keyboard was that it was rather small, with keys closely packed. Measuring up against the office typewriter's, however, showed that this was not the case. Texas say that the whole unit has in fact been cannibalised from one of their terminals. It is the lack of the normal editing functions at either end of the QWERTY bit that creates the impression of smallness – and this omission must be seen as a disadvantage.

It is overcome in part, by the use of CTRL (Control), FCTN (Function), and SHIFT keys to assign multiple functions to each key – including the missing editing functions such as Insert, Delete and Cursor movements. Until well practised, this can give rise to the 'all fingers and thumbs' syndrome – and is certainly not conducive to fast editing.

The use of CTRL and FCTN is partly redeemed by a white plastic strip above the keyboard on which you can write your own labels and legends for the top row of keys – especially useful when writing games, or for use by small children. Several blank strips are supplied with the computer (the idea obviously originates from TI's programmable calculator – the TI59), though, disappointingly, they had not been made use of in any of the otherwise excellent software we reviewed.

Opinion as to the 'feel' of the keys was mixed, from the users we tried it out on. Some said it corresponded well to that of a typewriter, while others felt it was spongy and imprecise. The demonstration unit we tested had evidently seen the wars, and one or two keys had started to become a little stiff.

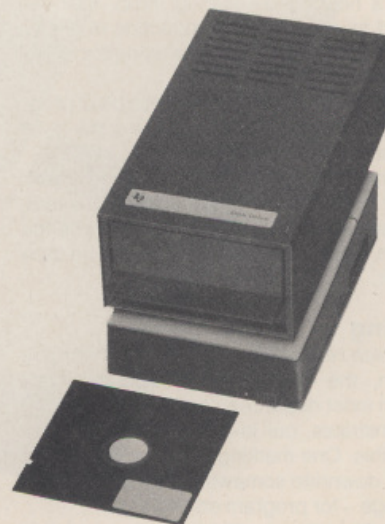
Screen

The screen on a TI99/4A consists of 32 columns by 24 rows of blocks which may hold any characters in any colours. Only 28 columns are available for BASIC text, however, which meant that many BASIC lines had to be split up on the screen.

Unusually, the SHIFTed characters are not lower case, but smaller versions of the same characters. We didn't really like the result, though it may have been done because many people find it difficult to read lower case on a computer screen since letters like g and y do not have true descenders. Any or all of the character set could be changed, if desired, by means of the user-definable character function.

Colour/Graphics

We encountered no problems in tuning the television into the colour 'test-card' picture which the TI portrays on the screen when first switched on. Colour was clear and definition sharp, except for a few combinations of colours which gave rise to rather 'vague' borders.



Disk Controller – shown here with one drive....

The whole screen is normally cyan (pale blue), changing to green while a program is actually running (a novel, but rather useful trick) – though it can easily be switched to any other of the sixteen colours on the TI's

TEXAS

palette. Any of the characters can be positioned on the screen with its own (foreground) colour – together with a background colour covering the small square behind the character.

Though there are no high-resolution plotting functions, as such, the TI allows the user to redefine any of the standard characters, as well as create his own special graphics characters for games or scientific symbols.

TI enhanced BASIC, however, provides colour graphics functions that are quite incredible – similar and in some ways superior to Atari's player-missile graphics. The programmer may define a number of 'sprites' – objects of any shape and colour that may be given speeds and moved around the screen at will.

Sixteen different levels of priority may be specified so that sprites can move in front of or behind each other, and there are specific functions to detect collisions or 'coincidences', in other words a crash or a score.

Sound

A large variety of sounds from melodious to cacophonous can be produced through the T.V. speaker – including synthesised speech if you purchase the appropriate peripheral for £99.

The effects are easy to produce, even for the beginner, by means of the SOUND command in BASIC. Duration, together with the frequency and volume specifiers for up to three components can be specified – in other words, up to three-part harmonies are possible.

In addition, a noise component can be specified – varying from a high-pitched whistle to a headache-inducing throb – all designed to assist in the production of explosions, zoomsplats and aliens dying excruciating deaths.

Don't let this put you off – a little bit of programming and you can reproduce some quite acceptable chamber music.

TI market a cartridge pack called Music Maker in which actual notes (semi quavers, crotchets and the like) can be edited on the screen, played and stored on cassette tape or disk.

Editing

In "Which Home Computer?" in our February edition, the TI99/4A showed consistently high in most departments, and as this report demonstrates, our in-depth evaluation supports this. One marking, however, we would like to downgrade somewhat after many hours of usage – for program editing.

Though editing controls exist – and it is therefore possible to modify any section of a program by inserting, deleting or overwriting characters, it is necessary to specify the lines you wish to alter, rather than move the cursor direct to the error. To be fair, the TI method only looks poor when compared to the excellent full-screen editing found on Commodore's PET and VIC models.

Sadly, the TI editing bears rather more re-

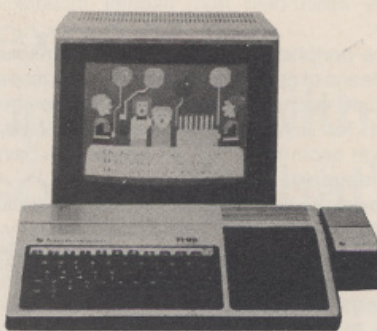
semblance to the kind of line editing found on BASIC's written for use with teletypes and early terminals, and indeed Texas Instrument's background in minicomputers may have been influential.

BASIC

Texas have opted for their own version of BASIC, rather than the most standard – Microsoft – implementation. On balance, the advantages of this decision seem to outweigh the disadvantages.

Under the latter heading we must place the scarcity of string handling functions (LEFT\$ and RIGHT\$ for example) found in most BASICs, and the fact that TI BASIC is rather pedantic about where you place spaces in your expressions (which most others aren't). However, generally speaking, TI BASIC is remarkably compatible with Microsoft – much more so than many other versions, anyway – and you should have little difficulty in converting program listings to run.

The advantages are mainly additional commands designed to help the new programmer. They include Toolkit-like functions for program development and debugging, as well as special commands for coping with sound, colour, graphic drawing and the optional joysticks. Many of the latter must be preceded by a CALL statement which seems a trifle unnecessary, though may have been incorporated with future expansion in mind.



The TI99/4A's colour graphics and low-cost speech synthesiser make it popular with young children.

TI Enhanced BASIC is a plug-in cartridge which is sold separately (with its own manual and quick reference card) – and we would recommend it as a must for any one who has got past the beginnings in programming.

Besides the superb graphics functions mentioned earlier, there are also some sophisticated facilities for accepting/validating data from the keyboard, and formatting results on the screen.

Documentation

This is of a high standard – consistent with TI's reputation for calculator manuals. A handy: "Read This First" leaflet explains how to set up the computer and check that all is in order.

"Beginner's BASIC" provides an introduction to some of the simpler ideas in BASIC programming for the complete beginner. The reader is shown how to create simple colour and sound effects early on – which is encouraging.

In addition to this book, comes the Users Reference Guide, which gives a detailed description of each command, with a handy reference at the front. At the end of the book are a number of sample programs to type in, glossary and one or two reference tables.

There is a distinct lack of any system information for the enthusiast, such as memory maps, or system level routines. This information would be fairly irrelevant, anyway, since there are no PEEK, POKE and SYS equivalents for penetrating the BASIC operating system. But it does confirm that TI intend their machine for the beginner or person who uses pre-packaged software, rather than the enthusiastic programmer.

The two books together do not provide a full course in programming. One is for the newcomer, the other is for those who know BASIC. If you wish to progress beyond the first, you will really need to purchase a separate book on programming.

Game Controls

The TI99/4A permits two joysticks (or Wired Controllers as TI refer to them) to be connected for purposes of playing games or moving objects around the screen in educational programs. We found the units to be well constructed and convenient to use – though many of our 'guinea pigs' said they preferred the more chunky designs of Atari and Commodore.

The joysticks were of the eight position variety, rather than permitting an infinity of different positions.

There is no provision on the Texas for game paddles or a light pen for pointing to answers directly on the screen, which is a pity.

Plug-in programs

This has to be one of the strong points for the TI – the quality and range of Solid State Software putting it at least on a par with Atari.

As mentioned earlier, the mounting/loading arrangements and physical construction of the cartridge system are far more satisfactory than most. Inserting a new cartridge while the machine has switched on caused the system to reset to its 'front page' – a kind of test card showing all the colours and the TI logo. Pressing any key showed the menu: Press 1 for TI BASIC, 2 for Space Invaders, etc – whatever the new cartridge contained.

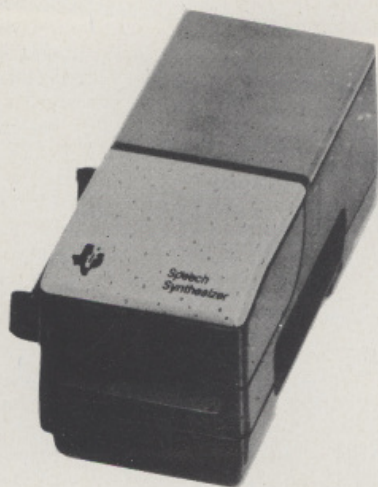
TI publish a catalogue of software titles, showing what is available on cassette, disk or cartridge, and what ancillary equipment is needed to run them.

All the more popular packages are sold in cartridge form, though we would make the point that several are very expensive, costing up to £40.

Although TI have made use of a number of software companies on both sides of the Atlantic, development has clearly been under central control. The result is that all the packages have a pleasing consistency in packaging, documentation, and the use of specific keys for moving objects, changing options and replaying games.

Secondly, because most packages were specifically developed for TI, they make full use of the colour, graphics and sound facilities. In a few cases, we felt, the designs had gone overboard, assaulting the senses and nerves with a barrage of sound and colour. TI claim, however, that all of their programs have gone through extensive user opin-

ion testing first. This may be well and good for Space Invaders, but the last thing you want in a quiet game of chess are assorted pips and squeaks on a lurid green background!



Speech Synthesiser – for budding Daleks....

The range of software falls into four categories: Home Management, Education/Personal Enrichment (!), Entertainment, and Other Applications (which includes a number of professional libraries – developed, presumably, from TI's programmable calculator applications packs). The Home Management titles were candidly described by TI's marketing manager as "The packages you need to have available on a micro but which aren't going to be of interest to the majority of users."

The Education series is superb in presentation – covering subjects such as Beginning Grammar and Physical Fitness. However, there has to be a fundamental flaw in Pre-School Early Learning Fun, which teaches the alphabet and numbers 1 to 9 yet requires the student to read instructions and use a keyboard (including such functions as Enter).

Entertainment scores highly, too, with all the old favorites such as Hunt the Wumpus, A-Maze-ing and even Oldies but Goodies I and II. Many contained that elusive quality of addictiveness – with some refreshing humour: Space Invaders may be specified as Merely Aggressive or Downright Nasty, for example.

Though the range of games is not as extensive as Atari's, and the amount of quality software marketed by independent suppliers is marginal, TI's catalogue of software is definitely a plus point for the machine.

Cassette

The TI can control two cassette recorders – one as both record and playback, and one for playback alone. This means that it is possible to store reasonable amounts of data on a cassette and update information by reading from one unit, making modifications and writing to the other.

Leads were supplied to connect to the ear-phone and microphone mini-jackplug sockets

of an ordinary cassette deck. We experienced no trouble setting up – though if your cassette doesn't have jackplug sockets, you will need to purchase a conversion cable from any Hi-Fi shop; this wasn't explained in the manual.

Programs can be saved onto cassette using the SAVE command in BASIC, and retrieved using OLD instead of the more usual LOAD. The whole process is well prompted and controlled on the screen for beginners, though once you have got the hang of it, the repeated checking may get a little tiresome.

Conclusions

The TI 99/4A is a well-designed machine, and supported by a good range of off-the-shelf software. Peripherals are well designed but expensive. They are, however, all *available* should you wish to expand the machine into a professional or development system. It is aimed at the new generation of home computer users and as such is unlikely to be favoured well by the older *enthusiasts*.

The TI's main competitors are the VIC, BBC A, and Atari 400. Though less of a 'convivial' machine than the VIC, it outclasses it on facilities and construction. The Atari has more software and high-resolution graphics as standard, but costs more and lacks a

proper keyboard.

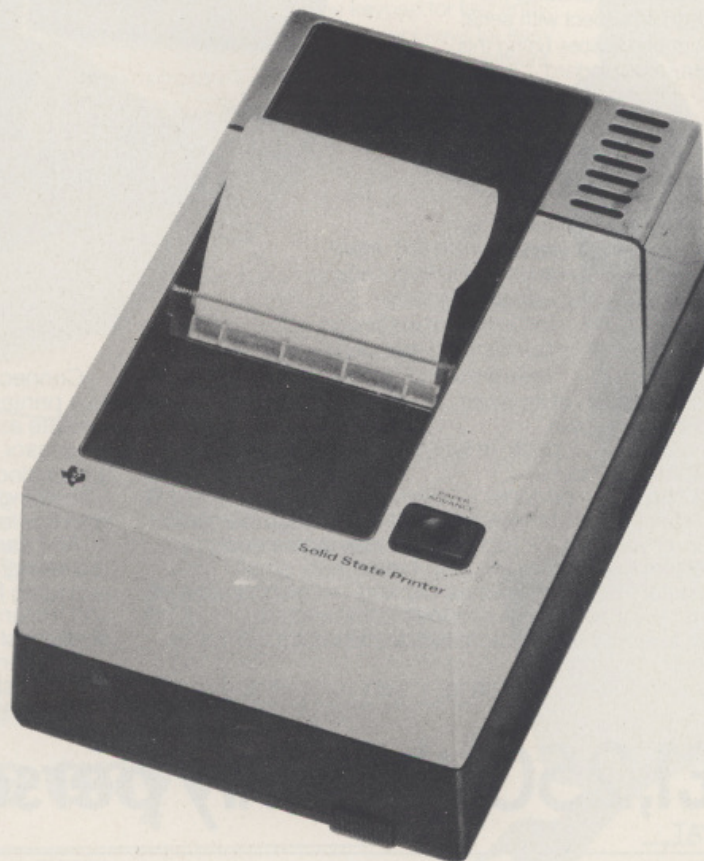
So perhaps the most interesting comparison is between the TI and BBC – currently the same price. On the one hand (BBC) you have an incredible specification and large user-following, but with only promises for peripherals and software, and construction clearly a low-priority consideration. On the other, you have a machine built like a tank, well supported from day one, but designed to keep the enthusiast at bay.

Likes

- * Good colour
- * User definable character set
- * High quality sound
- * BASIC with commands for Colour and Sound etc.
- * Enhanced BASIC option with Sprite Graphics
- * Range and quality of software
- * Convenience of plug-in cartridge feature
- * Solid construction
- * Good documentation

Dislikes

- * Separate power supply and UHF Modulator
- * Limited number of keys
- * Program Editing
- * Some software very expensive
- * Screen width limited to 28 characters for text
- * No access to machine code without expansion



Thermal printer (requires special paper)....

Technical Notes

The TI99/4A is based on the 16-bit TMS9900 microprocessor, though to the BASIC programmer, this appears no different to any 8-bit chip. The basic machine comprises 26K ROM and 16K RAM. Plug-in cartridges can add up to 36K of ROM, and a further 32K of RAM can be added externally.



OSBORNE

Dual floppy disk drives. Two 5¼" floppy disk drives provide 100,000 characters each of data storage, or about 60 pages of typed, doublespaced text.

Diskette storage. The floppy diskettes can be removed, providing infinite permanent information storage. Two compartments provide storage for up to 25 diskettes.

RS-232C Interface. Enables the OSBORNE 1 to connect with serial printers, or other devices using this popular industry-standard interface.

IEEE 488 Interface. Connects the OSBORNE 1 to the standard instrumentation bus, for data communication with test instruments.

Osborne 1.
It doesn't need a room of its own.
Or even a desk of its own.
With its optional battery pack, in fact, it doesn't need mains electricity for up to two hours.
It's – as you can see – portable.
Weighing under 24lb in its weatherproof case, it can be carried in one hand. Or in your car. Or tucked under an airline seat.
But its performance is equal to, often better than, small business computers several times as big and twice as expensive.
The Osborne 1 will achieve in seconds commercial, engineering or scientific calculations which, without a computer, would take days.
And store a whole library of data for instant retrieval and use any time.

Connected to a printer, it will operate as a word processor and produce letters, documents, reports – anything you want word- (and figure-) perfect.

And carry out financial planning, too, using an electronic spreadsheet, providing fast, accurate cash flow forecasts and instant answers to those important 'what if' questions.

You can see an Osborne 1 – and try it out – at any of the dealers listed below.

And then happily walk away with it.

For £1,250* the only personal business computer

*excluding VAT.

See the Osborne 1 at any of these authorised dealers:

LONDON

Adda Computers Ltd, Mercury House, Hangar Green, Ealing, London W5 3BA. Tel: (01) 997 6666

Business Computers (Systems) PLC, The Pagoda, Theobald Street, Bournemouth, Dorset BH6 4RT. Tel: (01) 207 3344

Byteshop Computerland, 324 Euston Road, London NW1. Tel: (01) 387 0505

Digitus Limited, 10/14 Bedford Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 9HE. Tel: (01) 379 6968

Equinox Computer Systems Ltd, Kleeman House, 16 Anning Street, New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3HB. Tel: (01) 739 2387/729 4460

Microcomputers at Laskys, 42 Tottenham Court Road, London W1 9RD. Tel: (01) 636 0845

Lion Microcomputers, Lion House, 227 Tottenham Court Road, London W1. Tel: (01) 637 8760

Star Computer Group PLC, 64 Great Eastern Street, London EC2A 3QR. Tel: (01) 739 7633

The Xerox Store, 84 Piccadilly, London W1V 9HE. Tel: (01) 629 0694

77 High Holborn, London WC1V 6LS. Tel: (01) 242 9596

110 Moorgate, London EC2M 6SU. Tel: (01) 588 1531

BELFAST

Northern Ireland Business Systems Ltd, 7/9 Botanic Avenue, Belfast BT7 1JH. Tel: (0232) 46340

BIRMINGHAM

Microcomputers at Laskys, 19/21 Corporation Street, Birmingham B2 4LP. Tel: (021) 632 6303

Byteshop Computerland, 94/96 Hurst Street, Birmingham B5 4TD. Tel: (021) 622 7149

BRISTOL

*Microcomputers at Laskys, 16/20 Penn Street, Bristol BS1 3AN. Tel: (0272) 20421

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge Computer Store, 1 Emmanuel Street, Cambridge CB1 1NE. Tel: (0233) 65334/5

CHESTER

Microcomputers at Laskys, The Forum, Northgate Street, Chester CH1 2BZ. Tel: (0244) 317667

DERBY

Datron Micro Centre, Duckworth Square, Derby DE1 1JZ. Tel: (0322) 380085

EDINBURGH

Microcomputers at Laskys, 4 St James Centre, Edinburgh EH1 3SR. Tel: (031) 556 2914

GLASGOW

Microcomputers at Laskys, 22/24 West Nile Street, Glasgow G7 2PF. Tel: (041) 226 3349

Byteshop Computerland, Magnet House, 61 Waterloo Street, Glasgow G2 7BP. Tel: (041) 221 7409

GUILDFORD

Systematic Business Computers, Braboeuf House, 64 Portsmouth Road, Guildford, Surrey GU2 5DU. Tel: (0483) 32666/35151

LIVERPOOL

Microcomputers at Laskys, 14 Castle Street, Liverpool L2 0TA. Tel: (051) 227 2535

MANCHESTER

Microcomputers at Laskys, 12/14 St Mary's Gate, Market Street, Manchester M1 1PX. Tel: (061) 832 6087

Byteshop Computerland, 11 Gateway House, Station Approach, Piccadilly, Manchester 1. Tel: (061) 236 4737

NEWCASTLE

Sage Systems, Hawick Crescent, Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 1AS. Tel: (0632) 761669

NOTTINGHAM

*Microcomputers at Laskys, 1/4 Smithy Row, Nottingham NG1 2DU. Tel: (0602) 415150

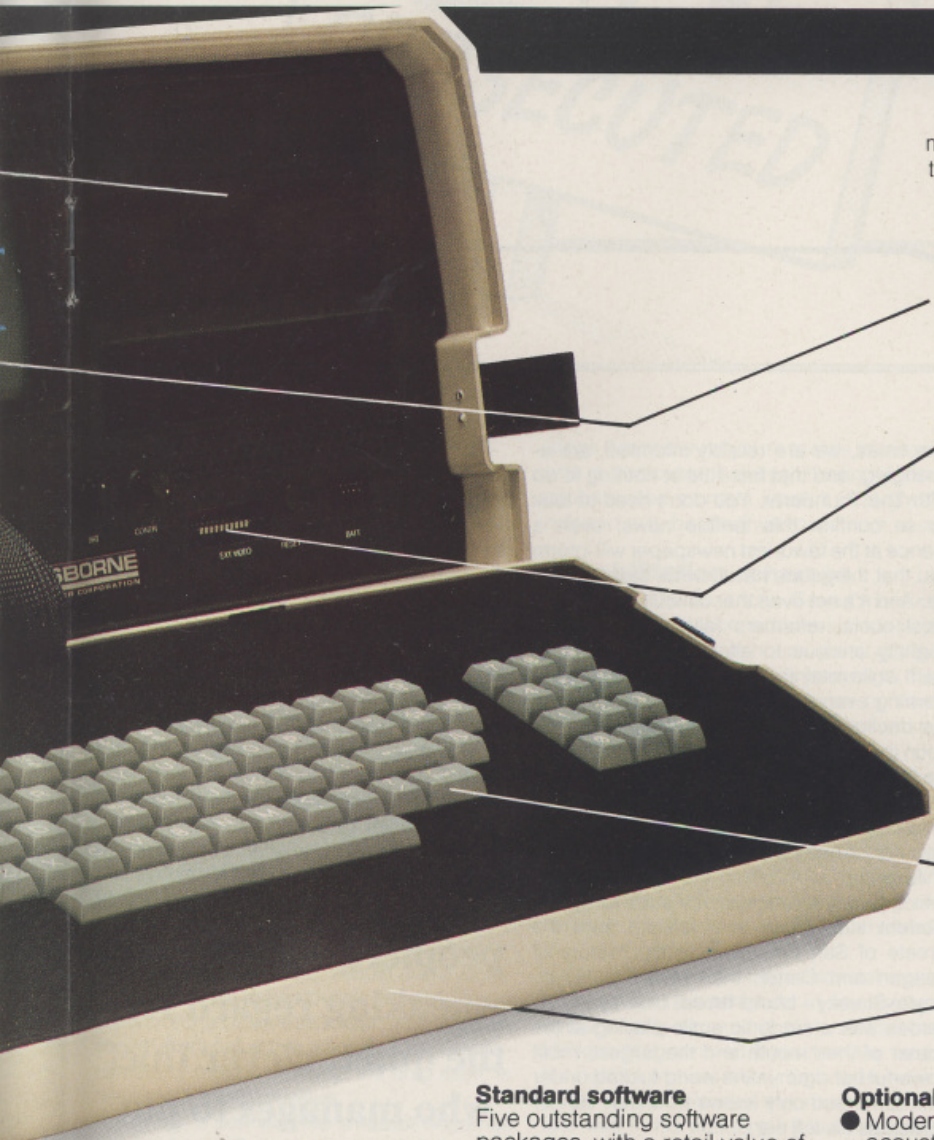
Byteshop Computerland, 92A Upper Parliament Street, Nottingham NG1 6LF. Tel: (0602) 40576

PRESTON

Microcomputers at Laskys, 1/4 Guildhall Arcade, Preston PR1 1HR. Tel: (0772) 59264

OSBORNE 1

TM



Internal electronics. Z80A™ CPU, 64K bytes RAM memory (60K available to the programmer, 4K used to run the screen.) System software is held in ROM in a separate address space.

Screen. Clear, 5", 24-row screen displays a 52-character window on a 128-character line with automatic horizontal scrolling.

Monitor Interface. Connects the OSBORNE 1 to any monitor screen.

Keyboard. A standard typewriter keyboard plus numeric, adding-machine keypad for fast entry, and cursor control keys for easy cursor movement.

Case. The plastic case snaps together to form a weatherproof, 24-pound package that fits underneath the standard airline seat.

Standard software

Five outstanding software packages, with a retail value of over £800 are included:

- CP/M® Operating System
- WORDSTAR® with MAIL MERGE®
- SUPERCALC™ ● MBASIC®
- CBASIC®

Optional extras

- Modem cable for use with acoustic couplers for telephone transmission of data
- Battery pack
- Double density disk drives with 200K bytes of storage per drive

Trademarks: SUPERCALC: Sorcim Corporation; Z80A: Zilog Corporation.
Registered Trademarks: OSBORNE 1: Osborne Computer Corporation; CP/M Digital Research; WORDSTAR, MAILMERGE: MicroPro International; MBASIC: Microsoft; CBASIC: Compiler Systems, Inc.

Computer you can take anywhere.

SHEFFIELD

Dalton Micro Centre, 2 Abbeydale Road, Sheffield S7 1FD.
Tel: (0742) 585490
Microcomputers at Laskys, 58 Leopold Street, Sheffield
S1 2GZ. Tel: (0742) 750971

SLOUGH

The Xerox Store, 3/4 William Street, Slough, Berkshire
SL1 1XY. Tel: (0753) 76957

SOUTHAMPTON

Xitan Systems Limited, 23 Cumberland Place,
Southampton SO1 2BB. Tel: (0703) 38740

TORQUAY

Crystal Electronics, 40 Magdalene Road, Torquay, Devon
Tel: (0805) 22699

For further information and full specification, return the coupon to The Marketing Manager, Osborne Computer Corporation (UK) Ltd, 38 Tanners Drive, Blakelands North, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK14 5BW. Telephone: 0908 615274. Telex 825220

More information on Osborne 1, please.

Name _____

Address _____

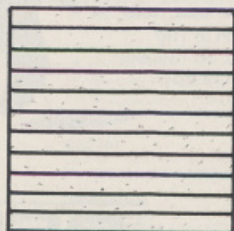
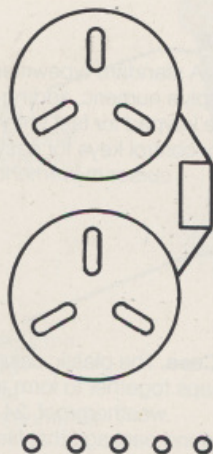
Tel _____

OSBORNE
COMPUTER CORPORATION (UK) LTD.

*Opening shortly



Richard Nichols on undetectable crimes – committed using computers.



The times, we are reliably informed, are a-changing, and that has little or nothing to do with The Thunderer. You don't need to look far to confirm this: terrible news; even a glance at the tawdriest newspaper will inform you that things are hardly what they used to be. And it's not even that difficult to see why. Most social reformers (all of whom seem mightily anxious to alter everyone around them while retaining their own status quo) are blaming everything from the summer riots to the decline in membership of the Brownies upon that Mephistopheles of split-level living, the box. Parked in the corner of every child's bedroom, the haunted fishtank is allegedly the perpetrator of more social evils than was ever dreamed of in Dennis Wheatley's philosophy.

In a funny sort of way it's easy to agree. Modern kids glean their folklore from the streets of San Francisco or the factory of Reagan and Carter; their idols are Kojak, Doyle, Starsky – bland-faced, blue-eyed pop heroes with a sardonic smile playing at the corner of their mouth and the largest, most powerful handgun in the world tucked under their arm. God only knows how Dan Tanner scratches his left ear....

Robin Hood

When I was a lad we didn't have a box. Baird was hardly out of his cradle. Amusement came from books, then, and our heroes were Janet and John, the estimable and excellent Winnie-the-Pooh, and later, as we grew up, even Biggles, or Robin Hood. And he was always the odd one out, that Robin. Quite aside from the fact that anyone dressed in green tights, with a feather in his hat, plus a marked proclivity for hanging about in the woods with a bunch of avowedly merry men is demonstrably unusual. Robin Hood, though, alone of all the heroes we were brought up on was a criminal. Or in modern parlance, a blagger. He'd sneak out of Sherwood Forest, slip into Nottingham, singe the Sheriff's beard, help himself to the Bishop of Hereford's gold bullion and then pop back into the woods to dine on the King's deer and carouse the night away with his mates, and possibly Maid Marion, if you ignore the rumours.

This activity was presented to our naive and youthful innocence as being in some way creditable, principally because he nicked stuff from people who had lots of it and gave it to people who had little or none. Consequently we are ingrained with the belief that although your average stair dancer, lifting transistor radios and Parker biros from ex-BSC employees on the dole, is a dastardly swine, anyone who is dissatisfied with the Inland Revenue and various other government agencies and may wish to speed up the process whereby wealth is redistributed is quite entitled to do so. Generally via a passing amount of public-spirited, and therefore commendable, brigandry. To wit, R. Biggs and friends who turned over HMG to the tune

“a great many people..... harbour a sneaking regard for the quiet, clever thief who manages to put one over the boss of the big corporation and his impersonal computer...”

of two million and became heroes overnight. In short, anyone who hits a large organisation possessed, in the normal, unwholesome run of life, of a great deal of mazuma and then shares it with his unemployed and erstwhile pauper friends is doing a rather clever thing, if not actually performing the sort of good deed which will gain him automatic entry into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Always providing, of course, that no innocent bystander or inoffensive employee of aforesaid monolithic corporation gets topped in the process. In other words, sawn-offs are a no-no.



Megabuck crime

In this modern day of microchip technology non-violent megabuck crime is easier than ever before. Indeed, it may even be conducted from the comfort and relative safety of a swivel chair, if not a Parker-Knoll reclining job suitably arranged before an open fire and an open cocktail cabinet.

And the reason for all this facility exists, gentle reader, within the confines of your own premises, or why else would you be wasting your readies on this estimable, but highly specialised comic?

Correct. It is indeed computers of which we speak. And we are not referring to weekend removal jobs in which proprietors of large computing organisations are deprived of a roomful of IBM hardware by a team of skilled professionals with a large lorry and a great number of previously empty tea-chests. My word no. We are concerned here with highly-skilled individuals who simply have unrestricted access to computers handling large sums of somebody else's cash. Although we should point out at this stage that the devil incarnate of modern society, the chip itself, is not without a certain value.

Regard, if you will, the smallest fingernail on your hand. Conservatively value it at fifty quid. Then work out what a full lorry load of similar-sized fingernails is worth. £1.5 million wouldn't be too far out, if you're at all interested. And that is almost exactly the value of a consignment of untraceable chips which went missing not so long ago in that part of California known to locals as Silicon Chip Valley, for reasons which ought to be obvious. Chips, say our transatlantic cousins, are as negotiable as dollar bills, which makes possession of a great number of them even more attractive than possession of a great number of pound notes.

Which brings you back to money.

It's funny stuff, cash. Be advised that if you possess a lot of it, and like having a lot of it, you are not alone. The world is full of people who would all like a lot of it, and in many cases the money these other people would like to possess is yours. If you have it in sufficient quantity these other people will soon discover a way to estrange you. And if at any

stage this money of yours comes into contact with a computer, however fleetingly, that is probably the moment when it is at greatest risk and may be lifted with maximum ease.

Rehabilitation schemes

Years ago the American Government introduced rehabilitation schemes into its jails. The most popular in-house training course was lock-making. That was years ago. These days the most popular course in Yankee nicks is computer science. No similar statistics are available for British prisons...

Despite this, and despite a number of spectacular crimes performed with the co-operation of a computer, most firms who process money via a computer remain endearingly blind to the possibilities for fraud. As usual, it's the Americans who are bigger and better in this field and who have chalked up the best crimes.

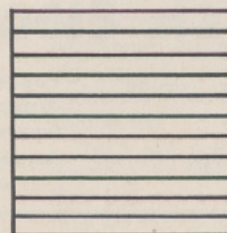
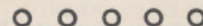
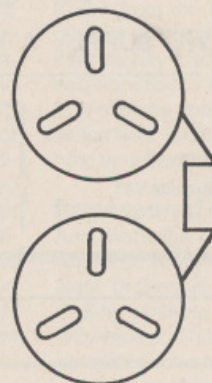
One employee of a large financial concern programmed the computer to pay vast sums into a private account in a Manhattan bank. He also programmed it to return the cash to it's rightful owners every time there was an audit. All he stole was the interest while the loot was in his account. He was eventually, and accidentally brought to book, as it were, because he was betting on the gee-gees to the tune of fifteen thousand pounds. Every day...

Another smart guy lifted several million dollars and turned it into diamonds. He was caught trying to fence more than three million pounds-worth of legitimately purchased ice...

Another chappie, with a friend fronting a legitimate savings account, had it away on his toes with almost two million nicker...

Dormant accounts

Yet another simply milked dormant bank accounts. All banks are riddled with these; the account-holder has died, moved or just forgotten about his or her account. Individually they're worth nothing. Most of them don't hold more than £50, generally a lot less. Collectively they amount to millions, and the advantage is that there's no irate customer to complain. One whizz-kid creamed a quarter of a



**INTERTEC
DATA
SYSTEMS.**

**ACT
Sirius 1**

**TeleVideo®
Systems**

SUPERBRAIN

Model	Hard Disc	Floppy Disc	Price
SD	—	2×162Kb	£1950
QD	—	2×338Kb	£2550
HD3	1×3Mb	1×338Kb	£3600
HD3	1×6Mb	1×338Kb	£3950
HD10	1×12Mb	1×338Kb	£4750

Lower-Case Board	£60
Custom Character sets	from £75
External Monitor Board	£60
Hard Disc Upgrades	from £1500
Graphics Board (256×512)	£400

SIRIUS 16-BIT

- ★ 1 Mbyte disc capacity ★ 128Kbyte RAM
- ★ 400×800 resolution graphics ★ CP/M-86
- ★ MBASIC-86 ★ £2400 COMPLETE!

**MicroPeople
Ltd.**

1 UNION STREET, LONG EATON,
NOTTINGHAM NG10 1HH
LONG EATON (06076) 69117

Model	Hard Disc	Floppy Disc	Price
801	—	2×367Kb	£2250
802	—	2×367Kb	£2050
802H	1×8Mb	1×367Kb	£3950
806'	1×8Mb	1×367Kb	£4950
816"	1×18Mb & Tape Backup		£9950
TS80 Workstation (Has No Discs)			£1000

Notes:

- ' 806 allows 6 TS80s, price inc. 1
- " 816 allows 16 TS80s, price inc. 2
- The 802 Models are integrated units.

WE SUPPLY A WIDE RANGE OF PRINTERS AND SOFTWARE

-----Ask for our latest list for details-----

All prices calculated at £1 : \$1.92,
are subject to change & exclude VAT

I want more information on the items indicated below. Please contact me:-

[] TVI model(s) Name
[] SUPERBRAIN model(s) Company
[] SIRIUS [] PRINTERS [] SOFTWARE Telephone Ext.

ZX 81 HARDWARE

KEYBOARD: Built £25.75 kit £20.50



CASE (for keyboard only) £10.30

EX STOCK!

(Allow extra 14 days for built products)

OTHER PRODUCTS

24 Line In/Out port.	Kit £16.96	Built £18.95
3 Channel music board	£16.95	Built £18.95
23 way female connector		£2.95
23 way male connector		£1.30
1 metre 30 way ribbon cable		£1.40
Male/female connector with ribbon	Assem	£6.95
Getting acquainted with ZX81		£4.95
Mastering machine code		£5.95
Programming for real applications		£6.95
Tape for real application book.		£11.90

Free illustrated catalogue. Send 9"x7" SAE.

All products have full instructions.

Redditch Electronics

DEPT MC
21 FERNEY HILL AVENUE
REDDITCH
WORCS B97 4RU
Tel (0527) 61240

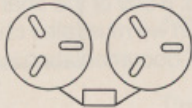
Postage and VAT included in prices.
Orders under £10 add 40p.
Overseas add £1.80
Access/Barclaycard order welcome.



cent from every account in the computer each month, and paid it to himself. He also made millions before he was spotted, but unsurprisingly, none of the account-holders noticed the theft.

The interesting aspects of all these crimes fall into two parts. First, and maybe most worrying, is that in practically every case the crimes would have all gone undetected by the company or individuals being robbed since the key is consistent theft of minute amounts. Most of these microchip privateers came to grief because of something they did after the successful accomplishment of their activity, like gambling heavily.

This comes about principally because the level of stealing is almost imperceptible and also because the organisations in question were not sufficiently aware of the risks and took too few precautions. Although we should not underestimate the intelligence of the criminal at this level neither should we ignore the obvious lessons which seem not to have been learnt; computer fraud can happen to anyone and a few inbuilt safeguards ought to be implemented in order to minimise the threat.



Determined thief

Even this is not enough, though. The same rule applies to computers as it does to everything else. If you have something valuable and a determined thief wants it then he'll find a way to get it, no matter how well you protect it. The trouble here is that most people, when confronted with the prospect of a determined thief, still conjure up the image of a rather ugly thug in black mask, stripey jersey and toting a sack marked 'swag' over his shoulder. They have difficulty looking along a line of freshly-scrubbed graduates earnestly slaving over a hot desk and seeing them as anything other than innocent baboons fit possibly for management fodder and precious little else.

The very idea that any one of these baby-faced pinstripe jobs might do for thieving what the Beatles did for Liverpool is entirely beyond their grasp. Yet this is regrettably the case. Let's face it, Crippen, at a midget five feet and a gnats wosname tall, hardly looked like a mass murderer. He looked like any other respectable gent. Like you or I, say. Blimey, you might even be Crippen for all I know. Or, and I have it on the highest authority that this is far more likely to be the case, you may be the thieving toad who's been depriving me of 1/4p every month for the last ten years.

Yes, it's a regrettable truism that while most department stores and other concerns which handle large sums of money in cash take stringent precautions against being ripped off by their own employees, even to the point

of paranoia and especially where the maximum inside job couldn't possibly net more than a few quid, very few of them demonstrate a similar level of sagacity in a situation where the heist would have more zeros than Liz Taylor has had husbands.

Take-home pay

The FBI believe that the annual proceeds from computer crime in the States may amount to as much as 300 million dollars; the average take-home pay of the electronic blagger being some half a million per shot. This may be an under-estimate since it is widely believed that many companies (especially the larger ones) are too embarrassed to own up afterwards.

Aside from the unlikely nature and appearance of the master criminal in these cases one of the main reasons that such frauds are so easy for the thief is the absence of the human element. Once upon a time (say about ten years ago) book-keeping operations were conducted by a roomfull of people who were jolly good at adding up and taking away; any one of these would be likely to spot an anomaly. Now we leave it all to the infallible computer. Unfortunately computers only do what they are told, and are too stupid to realise when they are being ripped off. In almost every case they are left more or less to their own devices, encouraged and shepherded only by a select few. Once one of the few decides to have a go the chances of being nabbed in *flagrante delicto* are remarkably slim.

Look at it this way. You get a phone bill, right? And unless it's well out of order you pay, soon as you get the third red notice, right? And even if it is right out of the ball park and you complain, what happens then? Some peroxide blonde at BT assures you that the bill is done on the computer and therefore can't be wrong, so naff off. And if you press your case, what happens then? They get the meter checked, find it's operating perfectly and suggest you stop prevaricating and cough up. Your doctor assures you that kneecaps are absolutely essential to the art of walking, so you pay, right? But suppose it was wrong? Suppose some smart ice-cream in the BT office has done a number on the computer and it's bumping up bills? The meter on the exchange is working fine. How often do they (or anyone else who sends out computer-originated bills) check up to see if the punters are being taken for a ride? A penny on every phone bill would be worth having, would it not?

Silly bill

Checking the computer is the last thing that anyone ever thinks of. But next time you get a silly bill you'll think twice, won't you? Bet the Gas Board don't. It's their computer, after all.

By now proprietors of Phone companies, Gas and Electricity Boards and Water Authorities all over the country will be throwing up their hands in horror, all agog to explain why it couldn't possibly happen. Permit me to

refer them at once to Stanley Mark Rifkin, who is currently languishing in the slammer, guest of Hollywood's most famous cowboy, R. Reagan, Esq. Rifkin is the chappie with the diamonds we mentioned earlier, who convinced a California bank that it *could* happen, and to the tune of more than ten million dollars...

Computer, um, errors, of this nature aren't always conducted deliberately, however. One American found himself accidentally the possessor of a large amount of below-the-line funding which came equipped with an astonishing collection of zeros at the end, and which could not be properly attributed to his legitimate business income. Fortunately for him he spotted it before the previous (and rightful) owner of same. By the time the gentlemen from the bank arrived to explain the mistake and ask if they could please have their money back the surprised beneficiary had transferred it to a foreign country, courtesy of some gnomes, and skipped, laughing all the way. It could happen to you, but don't hold your breath...

Impersonal computer

And that's the other thing. Every one of us would correctly look down a dignified and aloof proboscis if confronted with a thief. Picking pockets, blowing the doors off security vans and holding up banks with a variety of offensive armaments is a regrettable idiosyncrasy to which a few members of the human race are given, and we all correctly deplore such activity. But a great many people who feel that way about the less subtle crimes still harbour a sneaking regard for the quiet, clever thief who manages to put one over the boss of the big corporation and his impersonal computer without lifting a finger in anger or stirring from his chair. Most of us honestly believe that large companies can afford to lose the odd million here and there. Indeed there are many who think they deserve to get done from time to time.

The fact is that a genuine feeling in this country persists, based on the belief that if you earn more than five thousand a year and don't work on the Ford production line, then you're a filthy capitalist swine and ought to be relieved of the burden of your ill-gotten gains as soon as possible. Preferably by some form of modern-day Robin Hood with flowing locks and a sardonic smile of some kind, perhaps with a cigarette clenched between his teeth and a devil-may-care sneer at the doctor who has just predicted his imminent demise from an unknown wasting disease caused by slaving unsocial hours in less than salubrious conditions for an uncaring minion of a large corporation.

That's just our generation. Kids today, watching the box, weaned on Harold Robbins and similar from age three onwards, what will they be up to...?



Program D

Documentation is really the key to good programming, and yet is often the area given least attention. **Chris Preston** explains why it is so important and shows you how to pick up some 'good habits'.

Documentation is a very grey area in the working lives of most programmers. It is lumped with "washing the car" and "going to the dentist" in the list of things which ought to be done but tend to get put off as long as possible. As always though, the putting off only makes things worse, because once you have left a program for a few weeks or longer, the exact logic behind that cunning routine in line 2460 has faded from your mind, so that when something goes wrong you are left scratching your head and wondering how on earth it was supposed to work in the first place!

Documentation in one form or other is really the secret of good programming. By "good programming" I do not mean the ability to write a particular routine which takes less memory than anybody else's or runs so much faster. "Good programming", like "good behaviour" is something that must be acquired, but is difficult to teach. You will find that getting into the habit of writing full documentation for everything you code, far from wasting time, it can make life an awful lot easier.

So what does documentation involve? Documentation starts as soon as you have decided that you are going to write a program. There are several distinct phases that can be identified, as follows:

1. Planning Stage. We must write down what we want the program to do: what data we are going to give it; what outputs we want; and what processing is involved. The program should be broken down into sections, and each section described separately, with a "master plan" describing how the sections relate to each other.

2. Program design. We next design the program. This does not mean we sit down at the machine and start typing. Each of the sections we identified in the planning stage should be written on paper first and "bench tested", that is, going through the program manually with a paper and pencil, asking ourselves at each stage, "What will the program do here?"; "Will the IF statement in line 1200 cause a jump?"; "Is this bit doing what I really want it to do?" As well as

showing up many mistakes, this process helps us to fix details of the program in our minds, so that when the thing falls down when we first run it (and this is inevitable!), we can say, "Ah yes, I am not calling subroutine 15000", instead of "Why is there nothing in A\$? I wonder where I set that up?" Any potential problems which show up should be dealt with now; like bad pennies they will not go away. Remember Murphy's Law: If something can go wrong it will, and at the worst possible moment. Do not wait until the worst possible moment arrives: sort it out now.

3. Testing Phase. Once the program has been keyed in, it must be thoroughly tested. Any doubts we had in stage two about a particular part of the program should be put to good use by concentrating on that part of the program. Try to make it blow up. Key in ridiculous values. If the program collapses and you have to re-write a routine, be glad! That is one less bug! During the testing phase, the program is bound to be hacked around. If any of the changes affect the structure of the program then we must also change the documentation. Out-of-date documentation is almost as bad as none at all.

What form should this documentation take? Well there are various forms used depending on which stage of program writing we are at. In stage 1, the specification may still be somewhat nebulous and probably changing quite frequently, so we want our documentation to be easily alterable, too. When I first start to write a program, I make three lists. The first is "Program Inputs", which may be values from a disk file, or a keyboard or something exotic like another computer. For each input you should make a guess as to how long each item will be, say 30 characters for a name field, and a range of values, 0 to 5 for a numeric field. Complementary to the input list is a "Program Outputs" list. This gives, in fairly broad terms, what outputs we require from the program, either on the screen or printer, or going to another disk file. Again, field sizes and ranges of values should be included.

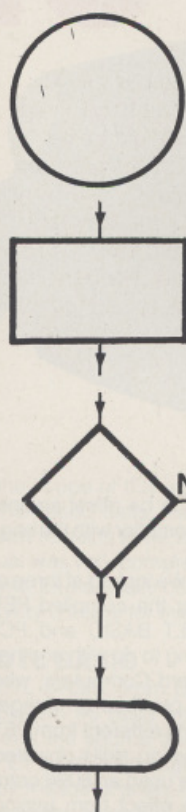
The last (and I mean the last list - this should wait until we have decided what the inputs and outputs are going to be) is the "Process List". This describes what the program is going to do with each of the inputs and how it is going to derive each of the outputs. When you write this list, you should be thinking ahead to the program itself, and put the list into a logical order, starting with reading the inputs, and then going on the calculation and output phases.

Flowcharts

The next stage is a little more formal; as this is where we define exactly how the program is going to run. The easiest

Documentation

method of describing program flow is by means of flowcharts. There is a certain amount of awe surrounding flowcharts but there is really nothing to them at all. Flowchart templates are easy to obtain and not expensive, or you can draw them freehand if you are not too fussy on how pretty they look! There is unfortunately no standard for flowcharts, but the four symbols I use are fairly widespread:



At the top of the flowchart, this symbol gives the routine a name. At the bottom of a flowchart, it acts like a BASIC "GOTO" statement, to allow you to jump to another routine, or in the case of a subroutine, this acts as a RETURN statement.

This is the basic 'action' box. Any activities should be put into one of these boxes.

This is a 'decision' box, corresponding to a BASIC IF...GOTO statement. It does not matter whether the side or the bottom branch is the 'yes' branch, this should be organised to make the diagram easier to read. Always label both branches though, it makes it easier to spot mistakes!

This box corresponds to a BASIC 'GOSUB' statement, and is used to call a routine on another flowchart diagram somewhere.

As an example of flowcharting, Diagram 1 is a chart showing my procedure for getting up in the morning. (As this is supposed to be a family magazine, this particular flowchart has had to be heavily modified - Ed)

Layouts

Going hand in hand with the flowchart are screen and printer layouts, and file formats. Screen and printer layouts are best drawn on graph paper of a reasonable size and really do save a lot of time if you are doing a complex report. No more hunting through line after line of BASIC counting SPC's and TAB's wondering how far across the page you are and whether there is room for that extra field.

Drawing your layouts beforehand also allows you to experiment before you actually write the code, and hopefully get a more balanced, easier to read layout. Planning file layouts also saves a lot of time when it comes to writing the program. Instead of having to remember whereabouts each field in the record starts, you can just look it up. You can also plan file sizes much more easily.

A typical file layout might be:

Field Name	Length	Start	End
Car Make	20	1	20
Model	20	21	40
Engine Size	4	41	45
Colour	1	46	47

Notice that the colour field is only 1 character long. You can often save disk space if you have an alphanumeric field with a small number of possible values (red, blue, white, black, say) by using a shorter code to represent the values e.g. 0,1,2,3. Of course, the documentation must include a table giving the corresponding colour for each code!

How detailed should the flowcharts be? A very high level flowchart would just say, "Accept inputs", "Calculate answer", "Print answer". This is not much help! A very low-level flowchart is just the same as writing the program, with one box for each BASIC statement. The ideal lies between these two extremes, and depends largely on the temperament of the individual programmer. The point is that the flowchart should help you write your program, and afterwards, it should help you remember how it works. Within these constraints, the level of detail is up to you.

Having done all our layouts and flowcharts, the actual process of writing the program should now be almost automatic. If you have to stop and work out any values such as TAB's, then your preparation has not been complete enough.

Tables

Going hand in hand with the program writing are yet more tables. You should keep a list of all variables used, and what they are for. If a variable is a code for something, such as the colour code in our example above, you should make a note of the range it is allowed to take, 1 to 7 say. If you are debugging and find that it contains 13, something is wrong. If you did not know that 13 is illegal for that variable it would be much harder to spot. Any 'special' values, such as -1, for 'unknown' should be clearly marked, because if you look up element -1 in an array or file you will get into trouble, and without your table you might sit for hours wondering why on earth that variable has got -1 in it. Worse still, you might take out the line which sets the variable to -1 thinking it was in

Compilers are all the rage – but are they really useful? **Peter Wood** found that efficiency, speed and program size varies considerably – but that compiled “Adventure” on a PET makes a good test!

like Garbage Collection (don't ask!).

The advantage is, of course, that you can alter lines, or parts of lines, at a moment's whim and run the program again straight away. Where compilers are clever is that they do all the hardwork in one go (and only once), putting the machine code out into a disk file (called an Object File) which then substitutes for the original program file you wrote (referred to as the Source File). Whenever you load and run the object file, you are really executing a machine code program, with all the benefits of speed you'd expect. The disadvantage (if it is one) is that you can't list the object file (since it's in hexadecimal) and you can't

ing a cigarette – remember that one?) and added the title “Waiting for the compiler to finish”. Need I say more?

Fifthly, size of object file – it's not much use having an object file that won't load into your computer through lack of memory space! Since compilers have to allocate room for variables at compile time (unlike the interpreter which merrily does it as it needs to), compiled programs may often be longer than their interpretive sources (although not always – more about this later on).

Lastly (whew) extra commands and statements – since we are effectively buying another language for the machine, why not reach for the moon and expect some extra functions as well. Some give 'em to you,



Just like program generators, compilers are very trendy at the moment, especially for the PET. That's not to say that they're not useful, 'cos they are, but rather that there's several around on the market. Before we get into the pro's and con's (sic) of the various models available, I'll bore the experts by giving the novices an overview of what a compiler does and why. If this is old hat to you then feel free to jump on to the meatier bits.

Unfair discrimination!

My trusty old Penguin Dictionary of Micro-processors defines a compiler as “1. A program which prepares a machine language program from instructions written in a source language.” and “2. A harmless drudge” (which scores another point to Penguin for having a sense of humour – I think). As many of you will be aware, programs written directly in machine code (or via an assembler) work considerably faster than those written in good old BASIC. The reason behind this seemingly unfair discrimination against people who aren't clever enough to write in hexadecimal or mnemonics (whatever they are) is as follows. Computers work in binary, and the closer your input is to binary, the less work the machine has to do converting it into something it understands and can use. This means that the actual operations can take place sooner, and hence appear to be faster. Clear? Never mind. Now when the likes of you or I key in a BASIC program, and then type RUN, the PET starts looking at the program line by line, and interpreting each and every statement into machine code as it goes along. This process is rather slow by computing standards, and can give rise to horrors

alter it, except by altering the original Source File and re-compiling it to produce a new Object File. Well, you can't have your cake and eat it!

Compatibility

There are six main areas of importance in compilers that I can think of. Firstly, accurate conversion and compatibility with the interpretive BASIC – fairly obvious; but I've heard many hair-raising tales regarding compilers that actually introduce errors (as if we didn't put enough in ourselves!). It also helps if you don't have to spend hours re-writing the program you wanted to compile just to suit the compiler.

Secondly, good error reporting – if you have made a mistake, it certainly helps if the compiler can at least equal the PET's interpreter in terms of reporting the fact to you (e.g. ?SYNTAX ERROR).

Thirdly, speed of operation of the compiled program – most people will compile to achieve greater speed (although others may require non-listable programs, for instance).

Fourthly, speed of compilation – it's not much good if you have a thousand line program and the compiler runs at 3 lines an hour, is it? One of my earlier incarnations was at a famous U.K. airport, where I worked on reservation systems (nothing to do with Indians) on minicomputers. We cut out one of those anti-smoking Government Health Warning adverts from the paper (with a skeleton hold-

others don't. This tends to be offset against the compatibility of the compiler with the original PET BASIC, though.

Well, back to the plot. We looked at three of the main contenders for the compiled PET market – Petspeed, DLT BASIC and PC-BASIC (which has nothing to do with another micro publication!) Oxford Computers, who market Petspeed, also produce an Integer Compiler (one that is fairly different from PET BASIC), but time and typing skills obviated an in-depth look at it. We used an 8096 computer (to get maximum effect from testing large programs) and an 8050 disk unit, although I believe versions of all these exist for most PETs capable of using a disk unit.

PC-BASIC

PC-BASIC uses a security ROM to prevent pirating which, rather unfortunately for us, uses the same slot as the WordPro ROM. However, a Philips screwdriver and my Apple (!) chip removing tool soon took care of that. It is necessary to buy extra copies of this chip (at £25 each), if you want the compiled program to run on another machine. Once the compiler has been loaded, the program disk may be removed and replaced with the diskette containing the program to be compiled. You are then invited to enter the source filename, object filename and printer type. Once all three options have been entered, everything else happens automatically and you can go and make the tea (assuming that

TUR

it's a long program). The current pass and line number are displayed as the compilation takes place. If you have a printer connected, an error report is printed, followed by the program size, the variable size and the total size in bytes. The program was very simple to use, although when typing in the file names it was all too easy to use cursor left and cursor right, which produced the "quotes mode" graphics rather than moving the cursor, which was rather annoying.

The version of PC-BASIC we had for review couldn't use the extra memory of the 96k machine, and was not compatible with System 96 (see below). There are a number of extra statements which may be included in the source program, but these fall outside of

disk in drive one then the last filenames used will be displayed, and may be accepted by one keystroke. Again the program was very simple to use, and the compilation was entirely automatic, with the pass number and current line number being displayed at the top left of the screen. Several extra statements are allowed for the more advanced programmer. The manual was clearly written, but lacked an index.

Petspeed

Petspeed was the simplest of all to operate; all you have to do after loading the program is enter the source program name. It apparently used as much memory as it wanted, and compiled *Adventure* ran happily on the

We used five different programs to test the compilers for accuracy, speed of compilation, size of object file and speed of execution.

Program 1 – Commodore's Disk Performance Test (mainly disk I/O)

Program 2 – Adventure (Jim Butterfield version)

REBOCHARGING Your PROGRAMS

the scope of this article. I have tabulated all the speed tests, file sizes and so on, so all that remains to be said here is that the manual was very comprehensive and easy to follow, and actually contained a detailed index (very unusual for micro software!).

DTL BASIC

DTL BASIC, from Dataview, can run under System 96 (also from Dataview), which allows the source and object to use the 96k PET to full advantage. Anti-rip-off is provided by means of a key-ring dongle, which plugs onto the cassette port. In order to use the compiler with System 96, it is necessary to fit one dongle, load and run System 96, remove the first dongle and fit the compiler dongle and then load and run the compiler. This can become rather frustrating after a few runs, but may not be a problem assuming that this is only performed once a day. A third dongle, labelled RUN TIME is also provided, which if fitted to the second (internal) cassette port, will allow programs compiled on the compiling machine to run on any other PET fitted with this run time dongle inside. These can be purchased separately as with the PC-BASIC chip.

On start-up, you are invited to enter the name of the source and object files, followed by three questions relating to printing, which result in a full source listing, error reports and size of the compiled program and variables. If a run has been performed before on the

8096 without any special software. The object file has the same names as the source with a (witty) suffix of "gt". Unfortunately for those who would like an automatic listing, the program does not have any print options during compilation, although a Report program is provided which can be run to produce a list of all variable names and their locations, together with a system memory map of the object. Copyright protection is achieved with one of the new stackable dongles on the cassette port, but unlike its competitors, the compiled program can be run on any suitable PET without any form of extra device (which has tremendous advantages for programmers wishing to speed up their own products without installing dongles or chips on their clients' machines).

Petspeed produces "Speedcode" which is a pseudo-code, rather than straight 6502 machine code. The Speedcode interpreter is attached to the object automatically at compilation time, and is transparent to the user. Whilst this means that there is always an overhead of 32 blocks on each object file, the speed of execution seems to be greatly enhanced. The manual was very brief, but gave all the necessary information to use the program effectively and rather appealed to my simple nature! No index was included, but with only twelve pages it was hardly necessary. The excellent execution speed and "dongle-less" object files made Petspeed my personal favourite.

Our thanks to Porsche Cars Great Britain Ltd. for supplying the photograph of a Porsche 911 Turbo.

Program 3 – Simple print to the screen program:-

```

5  TI$="000000"
10  FOR I = 1 TO 10
20  FOR J = 1 TO 2000
30  PRINT CHR$(I+64);
40  NEXT J
50  NEXT I
60  PRINT TI$
70  END

```


PET SPEED

Put some zipp into your programs



SPECIAL OFFER FOR EDUCATIONAL USERS

Volume discount on all
orders placed by accredited
educational users before
31st May 1982. Consult your
local dealer or ring
Oxford 49597.



Petspeed compiled programs Just ZIPP through your Commodore computer.

To illustrate the point Oxford Computer Systems (Software) Ltd., have produced an enlightening demonstration disk entitled "Life in the Fast Lane", which gives objective comparisons between Pet Basic, Petspeed and the alternative Basic Compiler.

Petspeed is the only **optimising** Basic Compiler available for any microcomputer, which is only one of its **other** advantages.

FASTER – Petspeed is capable of double the speed of the DTL Basic Compiler and up to 40 times the speed of Pet Basic.

SHORTER PROGRAM SIZE – the size of long programs is considerably reduced.

COMPATIBLE – Petspeed will compile ANY Pet Basic program.

OPTIMISATION – Petspeed is the only optimising Basic Compiler available for any microcomputer, because of its optimisation, programs run much faster.

SECURITY – Your programs belong to YOU. Oxford Computer Systems (Software) Ltd. makes no claim on Petspeed Compiled programs. No key or security device is required for compiled programs and users can build in their own protection. Petspeed code is unlistable and compiled programs cannot be tampered with.

PRICE – we will leave you to compare prices.

Also available **COMPILED INTEGER BASIC** – 150 to 200 times the speed of Basic Compiled. Compiled Basic is for those applications where the speed of the machine is required without the inconvenience of assembly level programming. Ideal for scientific and educational users. Compatible with Petspeed.



Petspeed for 8000 series	£240
Compiled Basic	£165

Special Offer: Petspeed for 8000 series PLUS Compiled Basic for just £320.

Prices do not include VAT or postage & packing.

Write or phone today for a free copy of the 'Life in the fast lane' demonstration disk.

Oxford Computer Systems (Software) Ltd.
7 & 8 Park End Street, Oxford OX1 1HH
Telephone Oxford (0865) 49597



TURBOCHARGING

Your

PROGRAMS



Program 4 – Simple poke to the screen program:-

```
5 TI$="0000000"
10 FOR I = 1 TO 10
20 FOR J = 1 TO 80
30 POKE 32768+(I*80)+(J-1),I
40 NEXT J
50 NEXT I
60 PRINT TI$
70 END
```

Program 5 – Simple array and data program:-

```
5 TI$="0000000"
10 DIM A$(999),B$(999),C(999)
20 FOR I = 1 TO 999
30 READ X$: IF X$="END" THEN RESTORE
35 A$(I) = X$
40 B$(I) = I
50 C(I) = I * RND(-1)
60 PRINT I
70 NEXT I
80 PRINT TI$
90 END
100 DATA "A","B","C","D","E","F","G","H","I","J","K","END"
```

DTL BASIC was the only program successfully to compile all the programs with no hiccups and no changes, and produced the smallest object files.

PC-BASIC managed only half of the programs with no changes, but was very quick on compilation time and fastest in execution on program 4.

Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 show the results obtained from our tests.

Table 1 – Compilation times

	DTL BASIC		PC-BASIC		PETSPEED	
	Min	Sec	Min	Sec	Min	Sec
Program 1	1	41	0	35	2	30
Program 2	10	00	*Note	1	3	06
Program 3	0	27	0	23	1	40
Program 4	0	27	0	23	1	38
Program 5	0	33	0	23	1	57

*Note 1 – PC-BASIC gave an "out of memory" error as it could not use more than 32k of RAM.

Table 2 – Object sizes (in blocks)

	Original	DTL BASIC	PC-BASIC	PETSPEED
Program 1	11	8	15	42
Program 2	49	35	n/a	86
Program 3	1	1	3	35
Program 4	1	1	3	35
Program 5	1	1	n/a	75

Table 3 – Run times

	Original		DTL-BASIC		PC-BASIC		PETSPEED	
	Min	Sec	Min	Sec	Min	Sec	Min	Sec
Program 1	1	39	7	39	7	23	*Note 2	
Program 2 (a)	0	26	0	26	n/a		0	16
Program 2 (b)	0	23	0	8	n/a		0	4
Program 3	2	25	2	33	0	51	0	33
Program 4	0	14	0	7	0	2	0	3
Program 5	0	36	0	28	n/a		0	9

Note – we tested *Adventure* both (a) setting up and (b) giving the first set of instructions, both of which involve many calculations and disk access.

*Note 2 – Petspeed gave a "string too long" error when program 1 was run.

Table 4 – Percentage improvement run times

	DTL BASIC	PC-BASIC	PETSPEED
Program 1	0	8	n/a
Program 2 (a)	0	n/a	43
Program 2 (b)	65	n/a	83
Program 3	0	65	77
Program 4	50	86	79
Program 5	22	n/a	75

PC-BASIC: £300 plus VAT from Intex Datalog Ltd. (0642 781193)

DTL-BASIC: £360 plus VAT from Dataview Limited (0206 865835)

Petspeed: £240 plus VAT from Oxford Computer Systems (Software) Ltd. (0865 49597)

System 96: £245 plus VAT from Dataview (or £100 if purchased with a compiler)

Oxford Integer Compiler: £165 plus VAT from Oxford Computers (Petspeed is also available together with the Oxford Compiler for £320 plus VAT)



1 A N A G

A sophisticated and intelligent BASIC program that will help you play Scrabble and solve The Times Crossword!

Anagram Cracker is a program designed to help crossword addicts (and any other word addicts) solve anagrams with minimum brain damage. It uses a form of artificial intelligence to suppress as many unlikely solutions as possible although there is a risk of throwing the baby out with the bath water. In any event, the user can have every possible combination of the letters displayed, the use of the intelligence feature being optional.

The intelligence is based on 6 main features:-

1. Unlikely endings
2. Unlikely beginnings
3. Unlikely two-letter combinations
4. Three consecutive letters containing no vowel or Y. This is a useful facility but does carry a certain amount of risk: for example, SCRATCH would be suppressed by this routine.
5. One, two or three letter words not in the "common" list.
6. Fixed positions for letters and spaces.

Of the above, routine 5 would only be used where there was more than one word. Routine 6 is the only one used in the non-intelligent phase.

The program commences by asking whether the intelligence feature is to be used. If not, the program will only use the all-combinations, non-intelligent phase of the program. The user is asked to enter the anagram to be solved. If this is more than one word, the entry must contain the spaces that divide the final words. For example, if the anagram is UFDEP and the answer is two words, three and two letters respectively, then the entry should be UFD EP (the actual order of the letters is irrelevant).

The user is then given the opportunity to enter any known fixed positions of letters. In the example above, if it was known that the second letter of the first word was E, the user would enter it when asked what the second letter was. Spaces are ignored for this purpose and an asterisk typed for any unknown position.

If the intelligence feature has been selected, the program will proceed to create various lookup tables, taking about 90 seconds for 7 letters and longer for lengthier anagrams. The letters are then cycled through a shuffling loop which produces a new combination on each pass. Any fixed letters or spaces are excluded from this. Having obtained a new combination, the letters are examined by the intelligence routines (if selected, otherwise the combination is printed out with fixed letters and spaces re-inserted).

By Bob Chappell

The anagram is suppressed if:-

- a) It has an unlikely beginning
- b) It has an unlikely ending
- c) It contains an unlikely combination of letters
- d) It has 3 consecutive letters which contains neither a vowel or Y.
- e) It has a 1,2 or 3 letter word which is not in the common list.

Suppression causes the anagram to be displayed as asterisks (this is merely to indicate that the program is still chugging along and hasn't hung up somewhere). If the anagram is not suppressed, any fixed letters or spaces are re-inserted and the anagram displayed. The program formats the anagrams to a convenient number per line and a convenient number of lines per screen. When the screen is full, the user is given an opportunity to study it before allowing the program to continue. If the screen happens to contain no possible solutions, it will clear itself and continue automatically.

Having exhausted all its possibilities, the program will proceed to display every possible

combination, taking into account any fixed letters or spaces. When this second phase is complete, the user will be invited to enter another anagram.

The program tends to run slowly when using the intelligence feature and naturally this varies with the length of the anagram. The non-intelligent phase is very fast. Bear in mind that a 4 letter anagram has 120 permutations while a 10 letter anagram has over 3.6 million! The program will tell you exactly how many permutations it has to make.

The letter shuffling routines at lines 65-70 and 450-535 were adapted from another program. Originally, I used a simple nested loop structure, one loop for each position in the anagram. This worked fine but was rather slow. The current routine, although not easy to understand or explain, runs much faster. The best way to learn how it works is to dry run it (that is, use a pencil and paper and take it one step at a time writing down each change in each variable as it occurs).

Another problem is that one is faced with the limit on the number of FOR - NEXT loops and GOSUBs that you can have in operation at any one time. This has meant that I have had to construct the intelligence loops without using FOR - NEXT statements, which in turn means that the program runs slower than it needs to.

The program has been written for a PET but uses no non-standard facilities (with the exception of the Clear Screen symbol, which is shown in the listing as a capital C), and so is easily convertible to any micro. Apart from the latest BASIC 4 ROM PETs, all other PETs suffer from garbage collection problems. This, too, reduces the speed at which the program runs.

The program uses some 10K. Arrays have been set at various arbitrary limits. If space is a problem, the look-up arrays can be reduced. I have set no limit checks when the loop-up arrays are being filled and a program error will result if any of these arrays overflows.

The program could be improved by refining the intelligence routines and outputting to a printer. The intelligence routines effectively cut down the number of solutions printed by some 90% or more. See if you can make it perform even more effectively.

7
C

G

R

A

M

A

C

K

E

R

The program does not recognise the fact that a letter can occur more than once in a word, consequently the same solution may appear at different points in the shuffle. It would be interesting to find a way to cope with this - for example, the program thinks there

are 6 possible combinations of ADA (3x2x1) whereas there are really only 3.

Now try to find the anagrams of CARSTUD and HAMLYN; I'm not saying the program's quicker but my head aches a lot less!

Anagrams, as the saying goes: Lure OK!

Major Routines

Lines	Description
20-70	Letter shuffling
80-100	Replace any known spaces or letters in their fixed places
110-120	If any 1 letter words, check if 'A' or 'I'
130-155	See if any 3 consecutive letters lack vowel or Y.
165-315	Check if beginning or ending of each word in the "unlikely" lists.
325-345	Check if any letter pairs in the "unlikely combinations"
355-400	Check if any 2 or 3 letter words absent from the "common" lists.
405-440	Word printing routine.
450-535	Letter shuffling control subroutines
540-575	Obtain anagram
585-740	Remove known spaces and fixed position letters.
750-825	Create the Beginnings/Endings list by checking the anagram for any of the pairs in the Data statements
835-915	Similarly, create separate Beginnings and Endings lookups.
925-960	Similarly, create the combinations list.
980-1070	Similarly, create the 2 and 3 letter word lists.

Major Variables

BT,BS, ET,UT,N2,N3 Total entries in the look up lists for Beginnings/Endings, beginnings, endings, combinations two and three letter words respectively.

NS	Number of spaces in the anagram
SN()	Pointers to space positions
P()	Pointers to fixed letter positions
TP	Total fixed positions
B1\$()	Beginnings/endings list
B2\$()	Beginnings list
EL\$()	Endings list
UC\$()	Combinations list
W2\$()	Two letter words list
W3\$()	Three letter words list
W\$	Current anagram string following each shuffle
CC	Column count
RC	Row count
FC	Flag showing whether Intelligence phase in operation.
L	Length of anagram after spaces and fixed letters extracted
L1	Length of anagram before spaces and fixed letters extracted.

```

5 REM **ANAGRAM CRACKER**
10 REM **BOB CHAPPELL 21/2/82**
15 GOTO1080
20 FG=FC:RC=0:CC=0:W$=Y$:L2=L1+1:S=L-1
25 IFFC=0THENPRINT"USING THE INTELLIGENCE FEATURE.
30 IFFC=1THENPRINT"PRINTING EVERY POSSIBLE COMBINATION.
35 M=0:GOSUB80
40 M=M+1:IFM<LGOTO55
45 FC=FC+1:IFFC<2THENGOSUB430:GOTO20
50 PRINT:PRINTTAB(12);"FINISHED":GOSUB430:GOTO540
55 FORC=1TOM:ONMGOSUB450,455,460,470,480,490,505,510,520:NEXT:GOTO40
60 REM **SHUFFLE LETTERS**
65 N$="":M$=RIGHTS(W$,1):FORG=STOL-TSTEP-1:N$=MIDS(W$,G,1)+N$:NEXT
70 W$=LEFTS(W$,S-T)+M$+N$

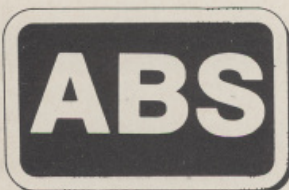
```


VISIT LONDON'S NEWEST ATTRACTION

(ENTRANCE FREE)

ANITA BUSINESS SYSTEMS HAS NOW OPENED ITS NEW RETAIL SHOP
AND WE CAN OFFER:-

- * Commodore, Apple and Adler Microcomputers
- * Associate Printers
- * Disk Drives
- * Full Software Support
- * Demonstration Facilities
- * Calculators
- * Typewriters
- * Dictaphones
- * Experienced Service backup on all equipment
- * Office Furniture
- * Video Department



ANITA BUSINESS SYSTEMS

50 FENCHURCH STREET, LONDON E.C.3
15 CLERKENWELL CLOSE, LONDON E.C.1

Tel: 01-253 2444

AUTHORISED DEALERS FOR
COMMODORE, APPLE & SUPERBRAIN
accept no less

We supply the best machines at best prices
Software for all machines, peripherals, printers, monitors,
disks, media, furniture
....and more!

**WORD PROCESSING -
SPECIAL OFFERS
RING NOW!**

ask about NEW 8032

FULL SUPPORT SERVICES



Telex 298641

MASS MICROS

07073-31436

**WELSON HOUSE, BROWNFIELDS,
WELWYN GARDEN CITY, HERTS, AL7 1AR**


```
760 RS=XS(JJ):FORJK=ITOL-1:IFAS(JK)=RSGOTO785
770 IFAS(NEXTJK)=LSTHENNEXTJK,JJ,JJ:GOTO795
775 FORKK=JK+ITOL:IFAS(KK)=RSTHENNKK=L:BT=BT+1:BIS(BT)=LS+RS
780 NEXTKK=JK-L1:NEXTJK,JJ,JJ:GOTO795
785 FORKK=JK+ITOL:IFAS(KK)=LSTHENNKK=L:BT=BT+1:BIS(BT)=LS+RS
790 NEXTKK=JK-L1:NEXTJK,JJ,JJ
795 FORJJ=ITOB2:READNS:LS=LETS(NS,I):RS=RIGHTS(NS,I)
800 FORJ=JK-L1:IFAS(JK)=RSGOTO780
805 IFAS(JK)=LSTHENNEXTJK,JJ,GOTO785
810 FORKK=JK+ITOL:IFAS(KK)=RSTHENNKK=L:BT=BT+1:BIS(BT)=NS
815 NEXTKK=JK-L1:NEXTJK,JJ:GOTO785
820 FORKK=JK+ITOL:IFAS(KK)=LSTHENNKK=L:BT=BT+1:BIS(BT)=NS
825 NEXTKK=JK-L1:NEXTJK,JJ
830 REM**BEGININGS LIST**
835 PRINT"CREATING LOOK-UP 2."
840 BS=OF:FORJJ=ITOB4:READNS:LS=LETS(NS,I):RS=RIGHTS(NS,I)
845 FORJK=ITOL-1:IFAS(JK)=RSGOTO865
850 IFAS(JK)=LSTHENNEXTJK,JJ:GOTO880
855 FORKK=JK+ITOL:IFAS(KK)=RSTHENNKK=L:BS=BS+1:B2S(BS)=NS
860 NEXTKK=JK-L1:NEXTJK,JJ:GOTO880
865 FORKK=JK+ITOL:IFAS(KK)=LSTHENNKK=L:BS=BS+1:B2S(BS)=NS
870 NEXTKK=JK-L1:NEXTJK,JJ
875 REM**ENDINGS LIST**
880 PRINT"CREATING LOOK-UP 3."
885 ET=OF:FORJJ=ITOTE:READNS:LS=LETS(NS,I):RS=RIGHTS(NS,I)
890 FORJ=JK-L1:IFAS(JK)=RSGOTO915
895 IFAS(JK)=LSTHENNEXTJK,JJ:GOTO925
900 FORKK=JK+ITOL:IFAS(KK)=RSTHENNKK=L:ET=ET+1:ELS(ET)=NS
905 NEXTKK=JK-L1:NEXTJK,JJ:GOTO925
910 FORKK=JK+ITOL:IFAS(KK)=LSTHENNKK=L:ET=ET+1:ELS(ET)=NS
915 NEXTKK=JK-L1:NEXTJK,JJ
920 REM**UNLIKELY LIST**
925 PRINT"CREATING LOOK-UP 4."
930 UT=OF:FORJJ=ITOTU:READNS:LS=LETS(NS,I):RS=RIGHTS(NS,I)
935 FORJK=ITOL-1:IFAS(JK)=RSGOTO955
940 IFAS(JK)=LSTHENNEXTJK,JJ:GOTO970
945 FORKK=JK+ITOL:IFAS(KK)=RSTHENNKK=L:UT=UT+1:UCS(UT)=NS
950 NEXTKK=JK-L1:NEXTJK,JJ:GOTO970
955 FORKK=JK+ITOL:IFAS(KK)=LSTHENNKK=L:UT=UT+1:UCS(UT)=NS
960 NEXTKK=JK-L1:NEXTJK,JJ
965 REM**VOWELS**
970 FORJJ=ITOV:READY(S):NEXT
975 REM**2 LETTER WORDS**
980 IFNS=OTHENPRINT"C":GOTO20
985 PRINT"CREATING LOOK-UP 5." N2=O:NS=NS+1:SN(NS)=I+1:X=I+1
990 IFSN(J)-X=2THENN2=N2+1:N2(N2)=J
995 K=SN(J)+1:NEXT:IFN2=OTHENFORJJ=ITOW2:READNS:NEXT:GOTO1040
1000 T2=OF:FORJJ=ITOW2:READNS:LS=LETS(NS,I):RS=RIGHTS(NS,I)
1005 FORJ=JK+ITOL-1:IFAS(JK)=RSGOTO1025
1010 IFAS(JK)=LSTHENNEXTJK,JJ:GOTO1040
1015 FORKK=JK+ITOL:IFAS(KK)=RSTHENNKK=L:T2=T2+1:W2S(T2)=NS
1020 NEXTKK=JK-L1:NEXTJK,JJ
1025 FORKK=JK+ITOL:IFAS(KK)=LSTHENNKK=L:T2=T2+1:W2S(T2)=NS
1030 NEXTKK=JK-L1:NEXTJK,JJ
1035 REM**1 LETTER WORDS**
1040 NI=O:I=I+1:FORJ=ITONS:IFSN(J)-K=1THENN1=N1+1:N1(N1)=K
1045 FORJ=ITON(J)+1:NEXT
1050 REM**3 LETTER WORDS**
1055 N3=O:I=I+1:FORJ=ITONS
1060 IFSN(J)-K=3THENN3=N3+1:N3(N3)=K
1065 K=SN(J)+1:NEXT
1070 FORJ=ITONS:READM$(J):NEXT:PRINT"C":GOTO20
1075 REM**INITIALISE**
1080 I=O:JJ=O
1085 FC=OF:P=O:TE=O:T=O:TU=O:TO=O:RC=O:BS=O:B1=O:B2=O:B3=O
1090 FC=O:N1=O:N2=O:N3=O:T2=O:NS=O:CF=O:Z2=O:YY=O:H=O:X=O:X1=O
1095 WS="" X$="" Y$="" M$="" S$="" TS="" NS="" L$="" R$="" ST$=""
1100 AS="" B$="" C$="" D$="" E$="" F$="" G$="" H$="" I$=""
1105 DIMPS(20),P(20),SN(I,O),NI(5),N2(5),TN(I,O),N3(5),A$(30)
1110 PRINT"C":TAB(8),"ANAGRAM CRACKER":PRINTTAB(7)"*****"
1115 PRINT"PRINT'DO YOU WANT TO USE THE'
1120 PRINT:"INTELLIGENCE FEATURE (Y/N)":AS:IFAS="N"THEN
1125 IFAS="Y":GOTO115
1130 REM**UNLIKELY BEGININGS/ENDINGS**
1135 LM=80:B1=16:B2=98:B3=12:DIMB1(LM),X$(B1)
1140 DATAB,C,D,G,J,M,P,Q,V,W,X,Z
1145 DATAB,C,D,F,G,H,K,P,Q,R,T,V,W,X,Y,Z
1150 REM**MORE UNLIKELY BEGININGS/ENDINGS**
1155 DATAHC,MD,MG,MH,NJ,ML,MM,NQ,MR,MT,MW,MZ,RC,RC,RJ,RD
1160 DATADE,FK,GK,HK,PK,TY,KY,ZK,HS,XS,BT,BT,GT,KT,XL,TL,XL
1165 DATAAT,AY,EY,FT,FD,GF,DF,GF,HF,KF,NP,PF,SF,TW,WX,XF,YF,IO
1170 DATANH,CN,NF,NH,NJ,NL,NM,NP,NQ,NR,NV,NW,NX,KA,LX
1175 DATAYR,SR,SG,SS,SR,SZ,SD
1180 REM**MORE UNLIKELY BEGININGS**
1185 B4=S4:DIMB2(B4)
1190 DATAMB,NB,MB,MS,MB,RB,RF,RR,RL,RM,RN,RP,RS,RT,AK,CK,EK
1195 DATAGE,LS,MS,NS,RS,TS,YS,CT,PT,LT,PT,RT,FF,IF,LM,LP
1198 DATAAL,AL,EL,FL,GL,HL,IL,LL,LL,LL,LL,LL,LD,LU,ND,NG,HT
1205 REM**MORE UNLIKELY ENDINGS**
1210 TE=150:DIME(LM)
1215 DATABA,CA,DA,FA,GA,HA,JA,KA,OA,PA,VA,WA,XA,YA,ZA,BH,DH
1220 DATARH,WX,XY,YH,ZH,BL,CL,DL,FL,GL,HL,PL,SL,LI,LI,MI,NI
1225 DATABR,CR,DR,FR,GR,HR,JR,KR,LR,TR,VR,WR,XR,UR,CU,DU,FU
1230 DATAGU,NU,JU,LU,MU,PU,QU,RU,SU,TU,OU,VU,WU,UU,YU,ZU
1235 DATAAF,AU,AV,BU,CG,EG,FG,FI,GI,GU,HU,IU,UI,UG,UG,DO,FO
1240 DATAOG,VO,WO,XO,YO,ZO,PO,RO,SO,TO,UO,VO,WO,XO,YO,ZO,G1,H1
1245 DATAGO,HO,JO,KO,NO,CO,RO,SO,TO,UO,VO,WO,XO,YO,ZO,G1,H1
1250 REM**UNLIKELY COMBINATIONS**
1255 TU=109:DIME(LM)
1260 DATAAA,AE,AO,AD,BQ,BA,BX,BZ,CB,CD,CF,CG,CJ,CP,CS,CW,CX,CZ
1265 DATAIY,BJ,JC,JD,JF,JG,JI,JK,JL,JM,JP,JQ,JR,JS,JT,JV
1270 DATAMK,MX,PC,QA,QB,QC,QD,QE,QF,QG,QH,QI,QJ,QR,QL,QM,QN
1275 DATAQS,QT,QV,QW,QX,QY,QZ,RX,SY,SH,UX,UY,UQ,UU,VU,VQ,VZ
1280 DATAVM,VN,VP,VO,VM,VS,VT,VV,VW,VX,VY,VZ,WX,WY,WZ,XX,XQ,XZ
1285 REM**VOWELS**
1290 DIMVE(6)
1295 DATAA,E,I,O,U,Y
1300 REM**2 LETTER WORDS**
1305 W2=24:DIMW2(W2)
1310 DATAAM,AN,AS,AT,BE,BY,DO,GO,HE,IF,IN,IS,IT,ME,MY,NO,OF
1315 DAUSAWE
1320 REM**3 LETTER WORDS**
1325 W3=30:DIMW3(W3)
1330 DATATH,AND,FOR,WAS,HIS,NOT,BUT,YOU,ARE,HER,HAD,ALL,SH
1335 DATAMA,ITS,OUT,OUR,MAN,NOW,ANY,CAN,OLD,NEW,OWN,YET,WH
1340 GOTOS40
```


THE ENERGY CRISIS SIMULATION

Concluding our series on simulation games that are both educational and fun. **Humphrey Walwyn** explains how to play *Energiesic* and publishes the program listing to run on your microcomputer.

In last month's article, I described the outline and design of an Energy game for a number of players 'armed' with a computer. I said I'd go away and write a program for it and – of course – construct myself a proper board (a more artistic version of the layout that appeared in the last issue), and play it several times. That I have now done and give my results – along with the listing – in this month's edition.

In brief, *ENERGIESIC* is a game about solving Britain's energy crisis over the next 100 years. Players represent banks with large amounts to invest in all types of energy sources and developments. The calculations are part fact and part estimation after many an hour spent pouring over official figures in public libraries. I shall describe the game and the exact rules a bit later but first let me turn my attention to the computer program. It's written in PET BASIC and should work on any PET with a minimum of 16K RAM and operating in upper case/graphics mode.

With reference to the *MicroComputer Printout* series on 'How to translate BASIC' (Dec 81 to Feb 82) it should be possible to convert the listing to run on most other microcomputers, since the program has been specifically written with machine compatibility in mind. The main thing to watch out for is the screen handling controls – a key to the programmed cursor functions appears at the end.

There are lots of things that can be added on to it to make it more complex but I've tried it out several times now and it seems to work very reasonably as it stands!

Variables list

There are 12 basic energy sources (0-11) and the index is always J.

There are 21 moves (0-20) each representing a time span of 5 years and some of the arrays include a running record of each value if you want to put in graphs and things later. Here the index is always K.

The arrays are as follows...

R1(11)	Known and proven reserves in MTCE (Million Tons of Coal Equivalent)
R2(11)	Economically recoverable reserves in MTCE
C1(11)	Maximum possible capacity of developed source per year in MTCE

C2(11)	Probable normal capacity of source for best economic return (MTCE)
P(11,20)	Current production capacity per year (MTCE)
S(11)	Millions of pounds probably needed to start a new energy source
X(11)	Development costs per new MTCE in millions of pounds
O(11)	Running costs per MTCE in production, in millions of pounds
V(11,20)	Share value in millions of pounds
NS(11)	Energy name
I(11,20)	% of share capital invested in each source.
D(20)	The date (from 1980 to 2080)
E(20)	The total energy requirements in MTCE for the UK each year.
EV(20)	Current value of energy to suppliers in millions of pounds per MTCE

There are a number of straight variables used. To save on memory space, several of them have different uses at different times but I'll mention the following:

Z9	If = 1 then game ends.
NN	The number of nuclear accidents to date (either Fission or Fusion)
P	Increased capacity
EX	Excess investment
EP	Energy production
ND	New discovery share price inflator
XX	If = 1 then extra capacity.

Program breakdown

Lines	
10-130	Dimensions of arrays and read DATA
140-310	DATA
500-560	Main program chain to link all main sub-routines
2000-2030	Investment and capacity display
2500-2580	Investment input source by source
3000-3520	Initial energy calculation to see what Government will do.
4000-4600	Calculation of all details source by source and display
6000-6460	Nuclear disaster possibility
10000-10020	'Press any key' delay
10100	Draw a line
10200-10235	Extra costs due to large fall off in production
10300-10390	All round increase in energy production costs.

10400-10430	Boost in share price for undeveloped sources
10500-10540	Source shut down due to lack of reserves
15000-15080	END OF GAME if total produced does not match requirements.

Requirements

- 1 Playing board (construct from diagram in last issue).
- 1 Computer placed on the same table as board with VDU easily visible to all.
- A set of 'poker chips' or counters for money with denominations varying from 1 to 500 million pounds.
- A set of different coloured counters or beads – around thirty for each player. (These are the share board markers.)
- And a set of 12 government takeover markers – one for each source.

Money

The total sum that can be in circulation by all players at the start of the game is 4000 million pounds. Divide this equally between the players.

Object

To make more money than anyone else (sensible!). This might NOT mean making the UK self-sufficient in Energy so you will have to be careful.... Money equals the cash you have in your hand plus the value of your shares on the marker board.

Number of players

1-8. With a one player game, it's simply a survival exercise!

Game theory

Players invest every five years in as many of the energy sources that they can afford. No more than fifty per cent (5 counters) can be invested in any one energy source by any one player. The computer is then informed of the total investment in each source (NOT who has invested in what) and may decide to invest itself in any source to maintain current energy requirements.

Profits, increased capacity and development are then calculated and the news displayed on the screen. Basically, the more money invested the greater the turnover and – perhaps – increases all round.

A general energy surplus may result in a fall in energy prices with sometimes disastrous effects. A shortfall in supplies may make the price rise, and profits and capacity jump accordingly. The fluctuation of energy prices is therefore very important since no player has direct control over this.

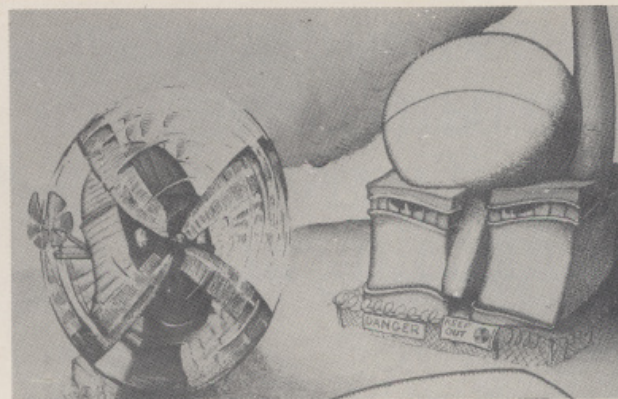
If at any time, the shortfall in energy requirements is too large, the computer will terminate the game with anarchy and breakdown the result.

It is really a matter of seeing when to get out of something and into something else. Some of the alternative energy sources don't have a high maximum capacity so you can make a quick financial killing but not solve the energy crisis in general.

How to play

- (1) Set up board, computer and distribute money and share counters. Load and run program.
- (2) The initial display (VALUES PER 10% SHARE) will tell you how much it costs to invest or sell any share. One player should really act as 'computer button presser' and banker.

In the first go, all players invest and pay to the banker accordingly any or all of their monies. Place the player's share counters on the board. From the second go onwards, there will be counters already on the board. Each go



consists of two phases. FIRST comes the selling phase and all players cash in any shares they like. Remove all relevant counters and move the remaining counters down so there are no gaps. SECONDLY, when they have finished, it's the investment phase and all players may buy up shares again in anything they like. These two phases may NOT be mixed up. No more than 50% (5 counters) may be invested by any player in any one source at any time.

(3) Follow the screen instructions and the computer will ask for an investment input for each source. Input total % of shares invested.

(4) The computer will then work out what the government wishes to take over to safeguard the National interest. It can take several 'key presses' for the final decision to be made (Government indecision!). Place a Government share marker on the energy source if it is taken over. This is for all the player's general information. The more investment, the greater your chances of success so it's good news to be taken over!

(5) The computer then displays a complex series of facts and information and news. Obey instructions where applicable.

Eventually it will finish the roundup of news and display a 'Government shares sold back' message. Remove all Government share markers. Every five years there is an option for private investors – that's you – to put money in. And, if the UK is still functioning (!), five years are added and you go back to (2).

Have fun.

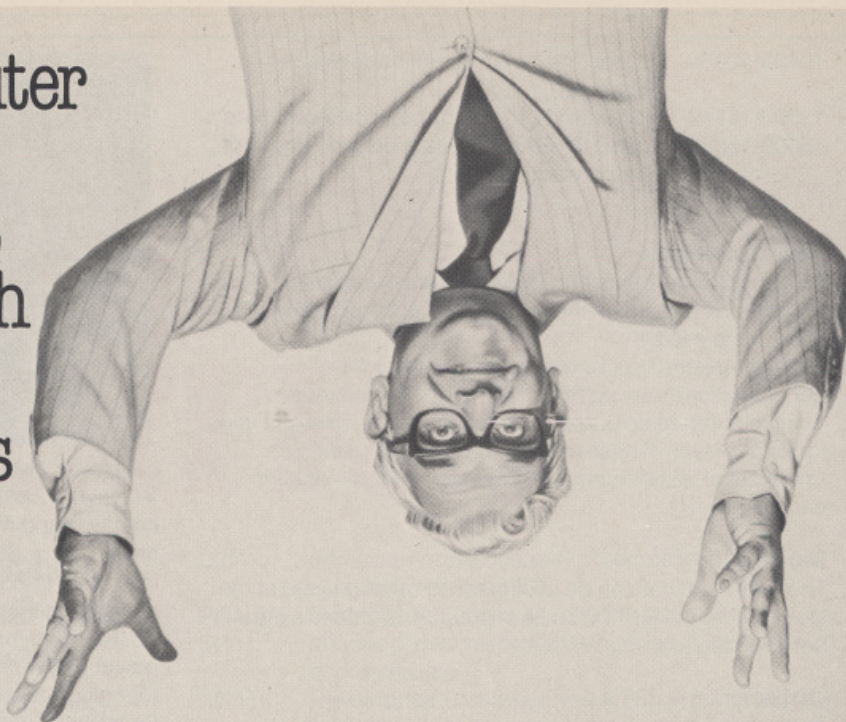
Advice

Look at the main display (2) carefully each go. Look at the board and decide if there is likely to be an energy surplus or deficit and invest accordingly. Investments in Coal, Oil and Gas are expensive but they are the main sources of return in the next twenty years or so. Coal will last even longer. Beware of nuclear disasters. You can't stop them, but Fission can be a steady money earner. Get into Tidal, Wind, Bio and Geothermal as soon as you can. It will increase the chance of becoming viable sources when the others start to run out. Solar Space and Fusion may be the only things around in 50 years so don't be left out of the market – invest now and get them going! A small investment in a non-producer is better than none and the Government may help.

Don't be afraid to sell if over-production happens with declining energy prices. Watch the running costs! Get together with others and make a long range plan. But don't take my word for it. Go for a whole new range of options and discover what may happen. Experiment is the name of the game.

If after playing a few times you feel that you could improve on the game, by all means do so and write to let us know. I would particularly suggest that you look at the Operational Costs and the rate at which they increase. The values I have chosen are fairly realistic – but very hard on the players.

"A leading computer company proves that if you've got something worth showing, it's good business sense to make an exhibition of yourself."



THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL COMMODORE COMPUTER SHOW OPENS JUNE 3RD

The Commodore Show is one of the finest opportunities to see the best of today's microcomputer systems in action. A wide range that covers our home colour computer and our selection of sophisticated business systems as well as the latest in software and related products.

Also we'll demonstrate just how they can improve efficiency, whatever line of business you're in.

There'll be seminars on education, communications and a wide variety of business applications.

Guests include knowledgeable and interesting people like Jim Butterfield, who's the foremost authority on the PET and its capabilities.

All in all, it's the biggest and best Commodore Show yet, and definitely not to be missed.

See us at: The Third International Commodore Computer Show, Cunard Hotel, Hammersmith, London.

Thursday June 3rd	12am - 6pm
Friday June 4th	10am - 6pm
Saturday June 5th	10am - 5pm



For further details ring

SLOUGH (0753) 79292

675 Ajax Ave, Slough, Berks.



**commodore
COMPUTER**

**Quite simply, you benefit
from our experience**

TOMMY'S TIPS

We start this month with me admitting to a couple of deliberate errors. Contrary to rumour, it is definite editorial policy to have a few boobs (no that's not quite the word I mean)... a few mistakes every month, so that people will write in to complain and we can get some feedback as to how many people are reading different parts of the magazine. If nobody mentions a mistake, perhaps nobody read that article. Of course, I have been absolutely buried with correspondence about my boobs (I must learn a new word!). In fact, BOTH my readers wrote in! My first mistake was in the February issue, where I said that pressing the STOP key causes location 155/\$9B to change from 0 to 16. Of course, what in fact happens is that it changes from 255 to 239, that is pressing STOP (and various other keys) causes bits to be cleared, not set.

The second little inaccuracy was in the March issue, "Scrolling Down". If you change every occurrence of CHR\$(148) to CHR\$(19) and every occurrence of CHR\$(19) to CHR\$(148) you should end up with a working program. My apologies to Adam Gawne-Cain who sent in the program: his version was perfect. Again, my apologies to anyone who was puzzled by these little quirks.

And so without further ado:

.USR v. .SEQ

Dear Tommy,

What is the significance of the .USR filetype on DOS 1 disk drives? Is it by any chance a way of recording Random Access files on the Block Allocation Map so they are not released by a Validate?

P.J. Jones

I am afraid not. In fact, as far as I can tell, there is no difference between .USR and .SEQ! Of course, I would be delighted if anyone has any information to the contrary.

Stack 'n Store

Dear Tommy,

Can you explain what the stack does in BASIC, and can it be used directly for any useful purpose?

D. Foster

The stack is used in BASIC to store quite a few things. The main uses are to store information on FOR-loops and subroutines, but it is also used when BASIC is evaluating an expression. As parts of the expression are evaluated they are pushed onto the stack to be used later in the calculation. The BASIC interpreter like any assembler program, uses the stack for its own subroutines. Unfortunately, none of this information is accessible from a BASIC program. To get at it you need to know the current value of the processor stack pointer, which is difficult to do from BASIC.

Cassette con?

Dear Tommy,

Why can some home computers use a domestic cassette recorder while others need special units? Is this a con?

F. McMaster

The answer is yes and no. To be really useful for storing data files as well as just programs, a tape unit really needs to have some form of electronic control, so that the computer can turn the motors on and off as it wants. Most small domestic recorders do not have this facility. The other reason is that the manufacturer is then sure how the cassette recorder will behave.

Domestic recorders vary widely in performance, and if users hang any old recorder onto their machines and get poor results, this rubs off on the computer, even though it may not be its fault. In addition, domestic recorders have their own power supplies, possibly mains-driven, which can cause problems, possibly even damaging the computer.

Really high quality computer cassette decks have features normally only found on reel-to-reel tape decks, such as high speed searching, which allows random access, but these are not normally found on home computers. You may be able to get your own recorder to work with a machine which normally uses a 'special', but it is likely to be more bother than it is worth, unless you are an expert and doing it for fun. Better in my opinion stick with the recommended system which is guaranteed to work reliably.

Get the point

Dear Tommy,

I am told that my Apple calculates using 'floating point' arithmetic, but I am very hazy about how it actually works. Can you explain it to me? What is the difference between floating point and fixed point?

W. Bruce

This is a matter which always causes confusion to people learning about computer arithmetic. It is one of those things that you can bend your brain over for days without understanding it, then suddenly it will click and you will be saying, "Of course, it's obvious!"

'Floating point' to a computer in fact has a FIXED binary point (unlike fixed point arithmetic!!). The paradox arises because the name refers to the number as the human sees it, not the computer. Most people are familiar with scientific notation, where 3500 becomes 3.5×10^3 A floating point number looks very much the same in fact. It has a fractional part (sometimes incorrectly called a mantissa by confusion with logarithms) and an exponent (also sometimes called the characteristic). On the Apple (and Commodore machines), the fractional part has 4 bytes, with one for the exponent; and the binary point lies just to the left of the most significant byte of the fractional part. Thinking in decimal, the number 100 is stored at 0.1 (fractional part) and 3 (exponent).

The exponent is the number of times we have to shift the fractional part to get the original number, so starting with 0.1 we get 1, 10 and finally 100. To make things a little harder to understand, the exponent is "excess 128"; which means that an exponent of 0 is represented by 128, 1 by 129, -1 by 127 and -2 by 126.

Another convention is used to represent the sign of the number. The most significant bit of the fraction part is really always a 1, so in practice, this bit is used to give the sign of the number: 0 being positive, 1 negative.

Here are some floating point numbers. The numbers in the floating point column are in hexadecimal to make it easier to visualise the bit patterns, and we have separated the characteristic to make it easier to see.

DECIMAL NO.	FLOATING POINT NO.
-3	82 C0 00 00 00
-2	82 80 00 00 00
-1	81 80 00 00 00
0	00 00 00 00 00
1	81 00 00 00 00
2	82 00 00 00 00
3	82 40 00 00 00

Note that zero is a special case, represented by 5 zeros. Let us analyse the number 1 to see how the floating point number is formed. First we look at the characteristic, 81. Remember that we are using excess-128 (that is 80 in hex), so 81 refers to 2 to the power one. The most significant bit is always a one (even though it is replaced with a zero for positive numbers – I warned you it was mind bending!).

We are now going to shift the fractional part left one place; left because the number is positive, one place because the characteristic is one over the 80. What 'falls off' the left will be our number. Just looking at the top byte, because all the others are zero we get:

BEFORE SHIFT		AFTER SHIFT
10000000	1	00000000

Hey presto! We have a 1. Let us try it with 3. This time we have to shift left twice, because the characteristic is 82. The top byte of the fractional part is 40, which is really C0 because the top bit is always set:

BEFORE SHIFT		AFTER SHIFT
11000000	11	00000000

Praise be, it works! Try it with the other numbers until you get the hang of it. Incidentally, whole books have been written about the pitfalls of writing floating point routines – there are many pitfalls for the unwary. Fortunately, most of us are able to keep clear of them.

Oops, I almost forgot, you asked about fixed point as well. Fixed point is where you convert all inputs to integers for calculation, then convert back to output the results. For example, if a program accepts a money value such as £100.00, the program multiplies by 100 to get 10000 (pence), which is used to calculate, say the VAT: 1500, which is divided by 100 to get the output value 15.00. Many high level languages such as FORTRAN and COBOL handle this 'scaling' of input and output automatically, and integer arithmetic routines are much simpler than floating point!

P.S. This must be the longest 'tip' I have ever produced! I'm glad I get paid by the word!.

New printer words

Dear Tommy,
I have been looking around for a new printer, and found that printer manufacturers are using lots of new words unknown when I bought my reconditioned golfball. Most of these are fairly obvious but can you explain 'logic seeking' and 'proportional spacing'?

B. R. Brace

I must say I sometimes get a little taken aback myself at some of the features you can get in remarkably cheap printers these days. I can remember several years back you could pay well into four figures for a printer which could only print upper case, had none of these fancy features and staggered along at just over 100 cps, but enough of my meanderings!

Logic seeking applies to bidirectional printers, that is, those which print both while the head is going left to right and when it is on its way back. On a non-logic seeking printer, the head always traverses the full width of the paper, regardless of how much or how little is to be printed on the next line. If a printer has logic seeking, when the printer has finished one line, the head will stop until the next line comes in from the computer, then it will decide whether

it has to move left or right, and by how much, to get to the start of the next line. In this way a lot of unnecessary head travel is got rid of.

Proportional spacing makes the printer output look less like a typewriter and more like printed text, such as *MicroComputer Printout*. Another name for it is 'even white space' printing, which makes it a bit clearer. What it means is that if you print two narrow letters such as "i" together, the printer will squash them together to close up the gap, and if you print two wide characters such as "M", the printer will space them apart so they do not run into each other. The idea is to keep the amount of white space in between the characters more even. This does mean that you cannot tell how long a line is going to be, because every character is not now 0.1 inch from its neighbour. Most dedicated word processors can cope with this, (though few micro packages can) but the only other real use is for 'fixed format' printing, say of a standard letter, where you can experiment with your text to find out how many words fit onto each line.

Sinclair round up

Dear Tommy,

I have a Sinclair ZX81, and I have a programming problem I would like you to solve. How can I round a number to 2 decimal places, as in pounds and pence? Is it possible to have a general rounding routine to round to any number of decimal places?

M. Peters

This is a very common requirement, so this routine should be of interest to many of our readers:

```
1000 LET Z = Z * 100
1010 LET Z = Z + 0.5
1020 LET Z = INT (Z/100)
1030 RETURN
```

This rounds to 2 decimal places. Three can be achieved by changing the factor 100 to 1000 etc.

6502 Instructions

Dear Tommy,

Could I please have a complete list of the 6502 instruction set with both the Assembly language mnemonics and the equivalent Hex codes. Could I also have a simple description of what each instruction does. Oh!! I almost forgot, would you happen to know where user memory begins and ends on the unexpanded VIC-20 and where the routine for the PRINT statement is located.

K. Wells

Apart from his two queries Mr Wells eulogised at great length about the magazine in general and this column in particular. Take note: how to get your letters printed in this column! I can resist everything except flattery (*and beer and beer and more beer – Ed*). If you are interested in learning 6502 assembler, can I recommend the book by Lance Levanthal? A complete list of 6502 instructions is really beyond the scope of this column, and anyway, we ran an article on assembler quite recently (July – Dec 1981).

User RAM on the basic VIC runs from 4096 (hex 1000) to 7680 (hex 1E00). The PRINT statement actually starts at \$CA9A, but the two most useful entry points are \$CB1E and \$CB25. \$CB1E prints a string addressed by the AC (LSB) and YR (MSB) which ends in a byte containing zero. \$CB25 prints a string pointed to by locations \$22 and \$23 whose length is given by the value in the XR. In both cases the string should be less than 256 characters long.



WHICH BUSINESS SYSTEM?

Last issue we commenced our series of record-cards giving the low-down on several popular computer models. We continue this month with a look at five more typical installations.

We stress, as before, that if you are considering purchasing your first microcomputer system, it is very important to study the software first. Make sure that there is a package available that will provide the functions you require, and is operated in a fashion you can understand. Secondly, you should check up on your supplier – can he provide satisfactory after-sales support both in the form of hardware servicing, and software advice over the telephone.

Nevertheless, we feel that it is very useful to have a good idea of the pros, cons and background to most of the popular hardware on the market. Not only in case you still end up with a choice of machines, but also to help you decide on which vendors to try out first.

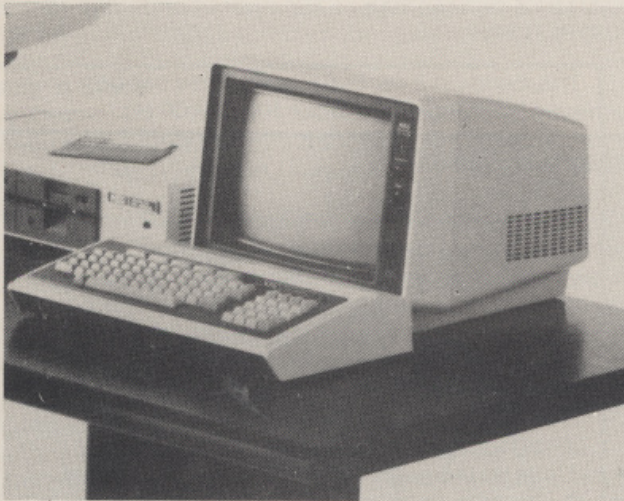
These handy system record cards are designed to help you check out what the hardware salesman tell you – and make your system choice from an informed position.

Listed on each card you will see some brief specifications and an approximate retail price. This includes keyboard, screen, disks and any requisite interfaces – but not a printer. Though several of the suppliers recommended the manufacturer's unit to go with a system, we found that each could operate a wide range of branded printers, though sometimes an additional interface costing £100 or so was needed.

The price also included operating system software, and in some cases, more than one programming language. You should allow extra for applications packages, however.

You will also find sections for Advantages, Disadvantages and our Comments – perhaps the most useful data of all. In a couple of sentences we have tried to sum up what we know of each machine, based on inside industry knowledge, reader's letters and our own technical evaluations.

Finally, there is a typical user. This should not be taken as the only type of user, but rather as an example application which makes best use of the machine's features.



NEC PC-8000

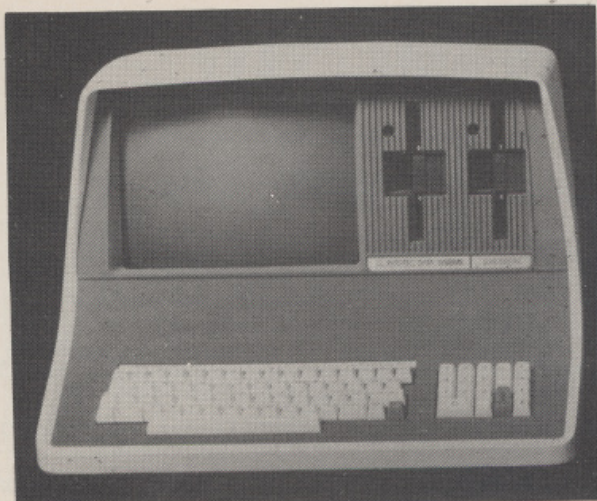
PROCESSOR:	μ PD780C-1 (Z80 compatible)
RAM:	32K
SCREEN:	8 colour, high resolution, up to 80 characters wide.
KEYBOARD:	Numeric Keypad, Programmable Function keys
LANGUAGE/O.S.:	N-BASIC in ROM, CP/M
DISK CAPACITY:	280K
PRICE:	£1900

ADVANTAGES: Complete system from screen to printer, with various expansion facilities can be purchased from one supplier. Neat design. Keyboard console has BASIC in ROM and colour facilities without recourse to plug-in enhancements. This is in keeping with Japanese reputation for reliability.

DISADVANTAGES: Though the UK distributors (IBR) are actively developing and buying software, relatively few of the CP/M packages make good use of high resolution colour and programmable function keys.

COMMENTS: The NEC is perhaps the only Japanese colour micro which is being actively marketed and supported with software in this country. Costs can be saved by buying a monochrome or low-res colour monitor and upgrading it later.

TYPICAL USER: Business where computed results are to be presented to clients – or in a design office where colour is mandatory.



SUPERBRAIN

PROCESSOR:	Z-80
RAM:	64K
SCREEN:	80 x 25
KEYBOARD:	Numeric keypad. Programmable function keys
LANGUAGE/O.S.:	CP/M
DISK CAPACITY:	320K
PRICE:	£2000

ADVANTAGES: All-in-one integrated design. Good keyboard. Good value for money. Most types of application package available.

DISADVANTAGES: Not much software written specifically for this machine. Physical construction could be better designed.

COMMENTS: A very popular machine for running CP/M packages without expensive hardware. Consequently it is widely sold for running Wordstar, along with a suitable daisywheel printer.

TYPICAL USER: Small business wanting good word processing on a budget.



ACT SIRIUS I

PROCESSOR:	Intel 8088, 16 bit
RAM:	128K
SCREEN:	Variety of configurations up to 132 characters wide.
KEYBOARD:	Numeric keypad. Programmable keys. Keys for volume and screen brightness.
LANGUAGE/O.S.:	CP/M and MSDOS (used on IBM Personal Computer).
DISK CAPACITY:	1.2MBytes
PRICE:	£2400

ADVANTAGES: Superb ergonomic design with detachable low-profile keyboard and adjustable non-glare screen. Compatibility with IBM hardware good for future software. 16-bits means high speed. High-speed communications ports will ultimately permit networking.

DISADVANTAGES: New machine and processor means a current lack of software written specifically to take advantage of this machine's special features.

COMMENTS: Very definitely a major step forward in microcomputer hardware – designed by Chuck Peddle (father of the 6502 and Commodore PET). The whole machine is 'soft' in design so that character fonts, display size, operating system and programming language can be altered and stored on disk.

TYPICAL USER: Modern office requiring up-to-date design and versatile display for management accounts, etc.

* STRIKE NOW !!!! *

UPDATE YOUR 8032 TO AN 8096

with 64k of dynamic RAM arranged in 4 x 16k banks. The board is totally compatible with CBM 8096 memory boards and includes these impressive features :-

- * Screen I/O peek through as on 8096.
- * On board regulator for power supply.
- * Straight forward simple installation.
- * Sockets for up to 16k of EPROM.
- * On board socket for processor.
- * Board comes complete with user documentation.

Price £289.50

including VAT packing and postage

Please send your cheque payable to **Typcraft Systems (Derby) Ltd.,**
to **128 Derby Road, Long Eaton, Nottingham. NG10 4ER.**
Enquiries welcome - telephone 06076 69324

MICHAEL ORWIN'S ZX81 CASSETTES

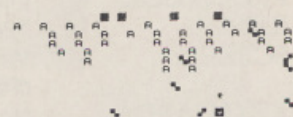
CASSETTE ONE for 1K ZX81

"I had your Invaders React cassette . . . I was delighted with this first cassette."
P. Rubython,
London NW10

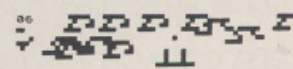
"I have been intending to write to you for some days to say how much I enjoy the games on 'Cassette One' which you supplied me with earlier this month. Please let . . . into the secret of your first time load every time!"
E.H., London SW4

Just two out of over 20 unsolicited testimonials.

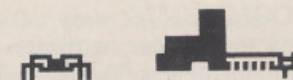
INVADERS (1K)



PHANTOM ALIENS



BUG SPLAT



Cassette One 1K machine code programs:

React, Invaders, Phantom Aliens, Maze of Death, Planet Lander, Bouncing Letters, Bug Splat.

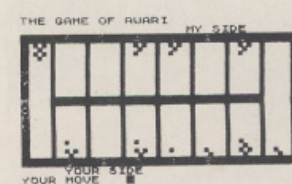
1K Basic Programs:

I Ching, Mastermind, Robots, Basic Hangman.
PLUS Large screen versions of Invaders and Maze of Death, ready for when you get 16K.

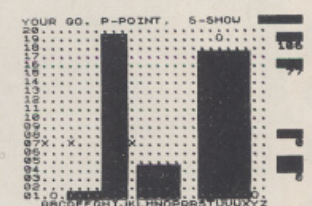
Cassette One costs £3.80.

CASSETTE TWO Ten games in Basic for 16K ZX81

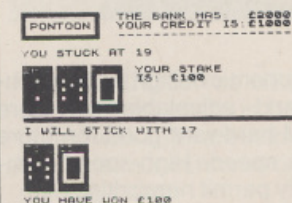
AWARI



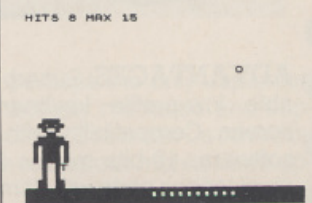
RECTANGLES



PONTOON



PENNY SHOOT



Cassette Two contains Othello, Awari, Laser Bases, Word Mastermind, Rectangles, Crash, Roulette, Pontoon, Penny Shoot and Gun Command.
Cassette Two costs £5.

Recorded on quality cassettes, sent by first class post, from:
Michael Orwin, 26 Brownlow Road, Willesden, London NW10 9QL. (Mail order only please)



COMMODORE 8000

PROCESSOR:	6502
RAM:	32K
SCREEN:	80 x 25
KEYBOARD:	Separate numeric keypad
LANGUAGE/O.S.:	BASIC in ROM
DISK CAPACITY:	1.0 MBytes
PRICE:	£1800

ADVANTAGES: Good disk capacity. Clear screen. Lots of well tried software from Commodore Approved dealers. Large installed user base.

DISADVANTAGES: Physical design rather outdated and clumsy. Won't run CP/M programs except with £500 peripheral. ROM-based programming language inflexible.

COMMENTS: The 8000 series is the business version of in the PET range, and though it will soon be getting a bit long in the tooth, it still represents excellent value-for-money.

TYPICAL USER: Company with large database of records, or requiring specialist packages, e.g. Estate Agents, Doctors, etc.



HEWLETT PACKARD HP125

PROCESSOR:	Z80
RAM:	64K
SCREEN:	80 columns – high definition characters
KEYBOARD:	Detachable. Numeric keypad, Function keys
LANGUAGE/O.S.:	CP/M
DISK CAPACITY:	512K
PRICE:	£3600

ADVANTAGES: Superb ergonomic design both with the high-definition screen and 'friendly' keyboard – the bottom line of the screen indicates what the function keys are for.

DISADVANTAGES: High price (HP sales policy does not permit discounting). Relatively limited number of dealers means that software packages developed are likely to be only of a specialist nature.

COMMENTS: Really a Rolls Royce machine – the HP125 marks Hewlett Packard's entry into the small business market. It is supported by a limited range of very high quality software – including VisiCalc 125, Word 125, BASIC 125, Graphics 125 and Link 125 (for communications).

TYPICAL USER: Company requiring best in reliability and user friendliness, good communications facilities, or ability to drive printers, plotters and laboratory equipment.

SIMPLICALC

FROM CRONITE

NOW ON
VIC 20!

THE LOW-COST ALTERNATIVE

SimpliCalc is a small, powerful work sheet program. It runs on any CBM PET, except "old ROM", even cassette-based. The sheet is viewed on the screen.

SimpliCalc makes the "what if" exercise available on all sizes of CBM. On a 32k it provides a much larger useable matrix than any similar program: on an 8k it provides enough space to analyse a capital purchase or personal tax computation.

SimpliCalc is freeform. Its uses are many. For instance, it's been used calculating chemical weights, projecting profits by product group, and costing out salary reviews. Be inventive.

SimpliCalc is simple to use, with 8 single-key commands. Print your sheet out, and save it on cassette or disk depending on version. A comprehensive manual is provided.

To order your copy of this versatile numeric tool, send cheque with details of your system, specifying whether your CBM is *2001/3000/early 4000 (PEEK (144) = 46) *late 4000 *8032 and whether you want cassette £29.90 incl. VAT or disk £36.80 incl. VAT (specify drive type).

Security copies available (no backup possible) at £4.00 cassette and £6.00 disk incl. VAT.

CRONITE COMPUTER SYSTEMS LTD, Montgomery Street, Birmingham B11 1DT.

Further details from Mark Turner on 021-773 8281 – telex 338247

TEACH YOURSELF COMPUTING VIA THE BBC SERIES AND HAVE FUN!

Introducing the TEXAS TI99/4A home computer which plugs direct into any T.V. for full colour.

Superior colour, music, sound and graphics – and a powerful extended BASIC – all built in. Plus a unique, new Solid State Speech™ Synthesizer and TI's special Solid State Software™. Compare it. Pound for pound. Feature for feature. There's a computer in your future. And the future is now...

We've entered a new and exciting era – the age of the home computer. Perhaps you're already quite knowledgeable about computers and are looking for the most programming power and versatility for your money. Perhaps you've just read about it, and want to learn more. Either way, you need to look closely at Texas Instruments TI99/4A Home Computer.

The TI99/4A was designed to be the first true home computer-skilled computer users and beginners alike will be able to put it to effective use immediately.

If you're new to computers, the TI99/4A is for you.

You can begin using the TI Home Computer literally minutes after you unpack it.

Without any previous computer experience or programming knowledge. You simply snap in one of TI's Solid State Software™ Command Modules and touch a few keys.

Step-by-step instructions are displayed on the screen. So you or just about anyone in your family can use the TI99/4A.

Two pioneering technological developments in particular set the TI99/4A apart from the rest.

Solid State Speech™ – This optional speech synthesiser enables the TI99/4A to literally speak-to provide verbal prompts and special messages to the user. Actually reproduces the human voice electronically. Hundreds of words are available, and plug-in word modules will add hundreds more.

TI's exclusive Speak and Spell™ electronic learning aid for children.

Solid State Software™ Command Modules – Available in a wide range of application areas including many games, (Chess, Blackjack/Poker, Pin Ball, Bingo, Attack From Outer Space,) to name but a few. These optional ROM modules actually add application program memory to your TI99/4A. Software now includes Teach Yourself Basic, Extended Basic, Teaching Aids for Young Children etc. etc. **They let you use the TI Home Computer immediately, with no programming.**

Serious programmers will appreciate the time and effort saved by these pre-programmed modules. Plus, they'll let you introduce your family to the computer in the easiest possible way. Solid State Software was pioneered by TI for use with its powerful programmable calculators.

If you know computers you'll quickly see the difference in the TI99/4A.

Texas Instruments has taken those features you've been wanting-plus some you may not have heard about yet-and included them in one incredible, affordable computer system. The TI99/4A gives you an unmatched combination of features and capabilities, including:

- **Powerful TI-BASIC** – Built-in 13-digit, floating point BASIC. Fully compatible with ANSI Minimal Basic, but with special features and extensions for colour, sound and graphics.
- **Up to 72k total memory capacity** – 16K RAM (Random Access Memory) (Expandable to 48K). 26K ROM (Read Only Memory) plus up to 30K ROM in TI's Solid State Software Command Modules.
- **26K ROM** – Operating system, BASIC, floating point, sound and colour graphics software are contained in ROM.
- **16-colour graphics capability** – Easy-to-access, high resolution graphics have special features that let you define your own characters, create animated displays, charts, graphs... and more.
- **Music and Sound effects** – Provides outstanding audio capability. Build three-note chords and adjust frequency, duration and volume quickly and simply. You can build notes with short, straightforward commands. Five octaves from 110 Hz (Hertz) to beyond 40,000 Hz.
- **Built-in equation calculator** – Unique convenience feature helps you find quick solutions to every day maths problems, as well as complex scientific calculations. Directly accessible from the keyboard.

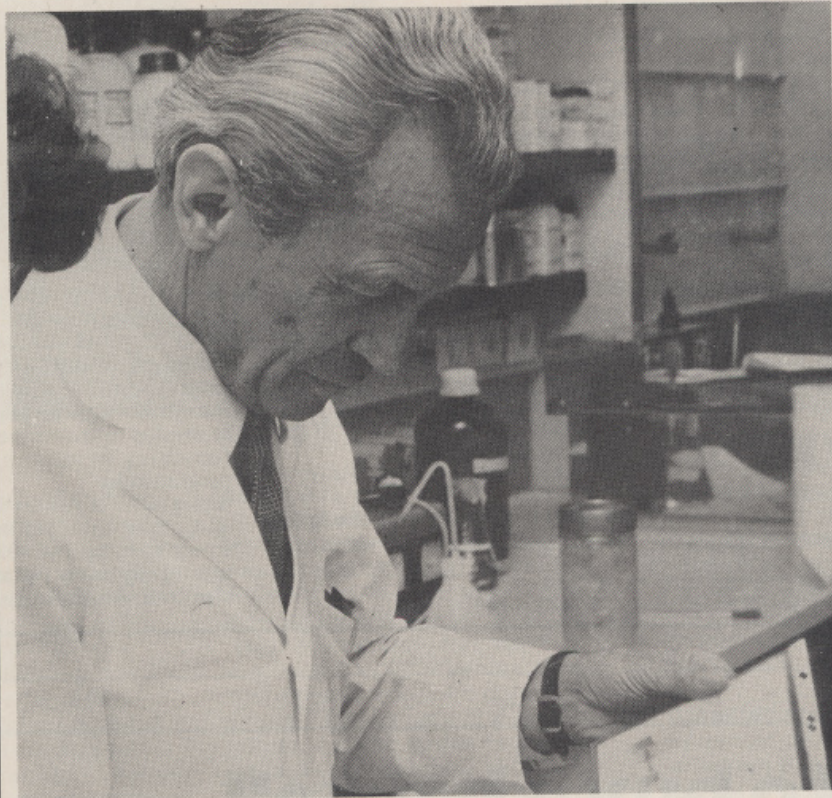
Ideal learning aid for every member of your family – including pre-school children and fun too only

FOR MAIL ORDER DELIVERY OR FURTHER INFORMATION TEL: 01-455 9823

£287.50

MOUNTAINDENE 22 Cowper Street London EC2

Doctors



Can Computers ease the Strain?

Are microcomputers being actively used to assist the doctor in making diagnoses, or can they really only help in the administration side of his practice? **Martin Hayman** took a trip to the surgery....

Medicine was one of the first professions to be touched with enthusiasm for computing. In the early 1960s, when the future potential of artificial intelligence systems started to be bruited abroad, it was predicted that doctors would become obsolete, to be replaced by super-clever, rule-based diagnostic computer systems. Such systems would "learn" from experience and synthesise the expertise of many doctors to yield diagnoses which, based as they would be on a much larger corpus of information than any one human being can access in short-term memory, would be more accurate and reliable than a human's. The diagnostic, or intellectual as opposed to manipulative (surgery, physiotherapy) side of medicine would become a highly automated procedure.

Wild predictions

These wild predictions are not only in

practice way wide of the mark; they have actually set back the cause of the computer in medicine, alienating doctors and patients on the one hand, and raising hopes unrealistically high on the other. At least, so says Dr Tim de Dombal, a surgeon at St. James Hospital, Leeds, who has researched computer aids for medical diagnosis since 1969 and has one of the few proven systems currently in use. Says de Dombal: "The computer was set on in the early 1960s to replace doctors, and in my view enormous harm was done to the field of computers in diagnosis."

Now there is a far greater awareness on the part of the public about what computers can and cannot do. This is largely courtesy of the micro, which has given many more people access to the machine and hence some understanding of its operation. Their expectations of computing have been scaled down and there is less paranoia

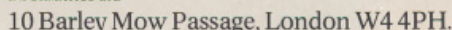
abies Informatics General Practice Computer System

The **abies** GP system is a flexible, professional package comprising all the hardware, software and support doctors need. It is completely self-contained giving full control of confidentiality and security. The software features a fully integrated record structure with all the data on-line all the time. Both hardware

Informative messages for the patient.

UniFlex multi-user, multi-tasking,
UNIX-like Operating System.

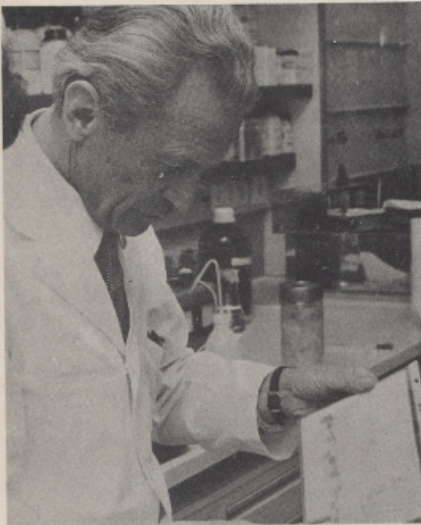
For further information telephone Tim Benson or Pauline Hill on 01-994 6477.



Stylograph Full feature word-processor with cursor-based editing, dynamic screen formatting and true proportional spacing capability. Optional spelling-checker and mail-merge.

abies Informatics Ltd is the licensee to the Department of Industry for mickie

Doctors



about computers "taking over". Many will have experienced computers in a small business environment, and this is the area where the majority of "medical" systems running on micros are to be found. After all, a general practice is not so different from any other kind of small business which offers a service – in terms of software writing. The principal difference which we shall come to later, lies in the general practitioner's desire to make full notes, in a fashion which is difficult to reduce or "tokenise", thus requiring copious storage. This leads to the argument that very little medical computing can be done on a micro, because it is neither reliable nor fast enough.

Diagnostic machine

The more interesting application of computing in medicine, and that which characterises computing for doctors rather than any other profession, is nevertheless in the diagnostic field. De Dombal has probably the most effective computerised aid for diagnostic decision-making available today and has demonstrated that a surprising amount can be achieved with relatively little outlay. Note that it is not a diagnostic machine, but an aid. De Dombal is very strict on this point: "None of us here in Leeds thinks that the day has come when the computer can make diagnoses," he warns. "I don't see it happening in my working lifetime (20 years) and I hope it won't." A computer, as all the elementary text books on computing emphasise, can only go to work on strictly defined quantities. There are many ways in which a doctor can establish that a patient's health is not all it should be, many of them unquantifiable. "The only things you can feed into a computer are symptoms or signs," he says. "But if you see a child and say to yourself, 'My goodness, he doesn't look well today', there's no way you can feed that into a computer."

De Dombal prefers to see his system as an aid in the same way as an X-ray

machine, an electrocardiograph or as a Coulter counter for analysis of blood samples. Each or any of these mechanical aids may be used in arriving at a diagnosis, though none of them actually signals a course of action. "A doctor can look at any X-ray and say, 'I don't believe it'. Without interpretation it can be quite wrong." How often was his diagnosis aid "quite wrong", I asked. He told me that the diagnostic accuracy of his system was 70-90% compared with the usual SHO diagnosis rate of 50-60% in this particular field (abdominal pain). These figures are impressively backed up by over 20,000 case studies from Leeds, Bangour in West Lothian and places as far afield as Mexico and Australia. All report on average a 20% improvement in initial diagnosis of abdominal pain.

Aide-memoire

How is it done? The answer lies in careful evaluation of the task in hand – again standard text-book stuff. In this case, de Dombal started his work more than ten years ago after a full three years spent evaluating the decision-making process in diagnosis. It starts by making prior assumptions on the likelihood of certain symptoms leading to certain diagnoses. Severe lower abdominal pain, for example, may well be porphyria, as suffered by George IV; on the other hand it is far likelier to be appendicitis. The first move, then, is to assign a probability to the possible diagnoses of particular symptoms. As examination proceeds, the possibilities are modified to take account of observed symptoms, ending up with the posterior probabilities. As the computer is programmed, it will effectively give a check-list of symptoms to check for – functioning also as an on-line "aide-memoire". For this reason it is also a very useful learning tool for students: if they overlook to explore a certain possibility, either through forgetfulness or lack of experience, it will prompt them to go back and check for that symptom.

It all sounds blissfully simple; intriguingly, its principles are based on Bayes' theorem. Bayes was an eighteenth century English clergyman who used this mathematical model to prove the existence of God through observation of external phenomena; his theorem was found on his desk after his death and published in 1753. "It's a shame it's not based on more up-to-date mathematics, but as it happens Bayes' theorem proves rather a good model for medical diagnosis." Reduced to medical terms, a great deal of data on the occurrence of abdominal pain (derived from the World Organisation of Gastroenterology's Research Committee) is used to weight the probabilities in the program's model; if you have severe lower abdominal pain, there is a 24% chance that you do have appendicitis.

The computer holds a large matrix of existing cases which are not, however, stored in an attributable form, thereby overcoming one of the principal objections to computers in medicine, that it is easy to correlate medical data with certain other kinds of computerised records – to the

disadvantage of the subject. "If you, as a miscreant, try to come along and see if someone who is known to you is suffering from some unmentionable disease, you won't be able to." Though de Dombal has concentrated on abdominal pain, other hospitals have extended his work into the areas of jaundice and coma: conditions which some patients might prefer a prospective employer, say, not to know about.

De Dombal uses a PET, although the system is adapted to run on an Apple or a Wang 2200. When he first started computerising, he had the use of 1K on a Wang 770c. Consequently, his system is extremely economical: the Basic program, yielding a bar-chart read-out of diagnostic probabilities, plus the data module being worked on, is contained in a print-out as short (or as long, if you prefer) as your arm. This seems to be the case whether the program prompts are in English or any other of the languages in which the Leeds system is available: French, Flemish, Dutch, Danish, Spanish, Norwegian, or Thai. The system has 32K, with a further 154K overlaid in the form of data disks. Its compactness and simplicity prompted the British Medical Association's micro mastermind, Dr. John Dawson, to describe it as "one of the most elegant uses of the micro I have ever seen." What was the secret of its elegance? "It's elegant because it's simple; and if you know a lot of medicine, you'll know a student's priorities – the way his mind works when making a diagnosis."

Disaster area

By contrast, Dr. Mike Sheldon, who researches into expert systems for general practice at Nottingham University, would advise the GP to steer clear of micro-based systems. "I can take you to 12 practices which have bought small computers and they're all cursing the day that they ever heard of them. It's a disaster area." The needs of the GP, says Dr. Sheldon, are very similar to those of a small business. He needs to keep an age/sex register of his patients, with recall dates; he needs to be able to print out prescriptions and to handle his own accounts; and he needs to keep full clinical records of each patient. This last requirement is particularly consumptive of memory; Sheldon's prescription is a fixed Winchester at the least, preferably with another, removable disk. This is partly because of his views on the structure of medicine in the UK. He believes that the GP's surgery is the place where the majority of illnesses should be treated. GPs, he says, are an under-used resource; and that far too many patients are referred to consultants, with their long waiting lists. His aim is to provide the necessary tools in the GP's surgery to allow the vast majority of treatment to be done on the spot. Surely, I asked him, the GP generally sees people with minor complaints and hence is unlikely to need access to large-scale clinical databases through his own communications link?

"The great challenge to the GP is the one patient in 10 who has a condition of serious importance. It's a skilled job. Consultants are useless – there's a ten-week waiting list –

HIGH RESOLUTION

ON SCREEN

with the HR-40 and HR-80 High Resolution Graphics Boards. You'll be able to access each of 64000 dots in a 320 by 200 matrix on your PET's screen. Utility software included.

£149 + VAT

ON PAPER

with the EPSON MX80 F/T Type 2 printer. High resolution graphics plus double-width, condensed or emphasised text. Addressable PET interface and cable included!

£450 + VAT

NOW PUT THEM TOGETHER

MX-SCREENDUMP (£12 + VAT) will print the contents of your high resolution screen on your MX-80 Type 2 printer.
MX-LIST (£15 + VAT) lists Basic programs to an F/T 2 with all PET graphics and cursor symbols faithfully reproduced!

SUPERSOFT

First Floor, 10-14 Canning Road, Wealdstone,
Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 7SJ, England
Telephone: 01-861 1166

8032 + 64k = 8096

Phone for details

THE LEADING MICRO COMPUTER SUPPLIER

SUMLOCK

**BONDAIN
LTD.**

Due to every increasing installations, are always interested in hearing from Trained Field Service Technicians. A professional approach is essential to meet the requirements of many of our multinational users, and applicants would need to measure up to these standards, salaries and conditions commensurate with a well established company.

Apply for further information and interview:

J. White,
Sumlock Bondain Ltd.,
263-269 City Road,
London EC1V 1JX
Tel: 01-250 0505

TI99/4A only £259
(£302.50 including VAT & carriage)

+ 20 Program Library

CC(S) Recorder £20 (+ £5 VAT & carr.) CC(S) TI Rec. Lead £5.75 inc. VAT/carr.

BARGAIN PACKAGE (worth £65 more)

TI99/4A Computer
+ CC(S) Recorder
+ CC(S) Recorder Lead
+ 20 Program Library
only £279
(£325 inc. VAT & carr.)

NB. We will MATCH ANY PRICE (for genuine stock offers)
AND supply our 20 PROGRAM LIBRARY FREE with TI99/4A sales

Command Module (Software)

	Total Price		Total Price
Beginning Grammar	18.75	Terminal Emulator	52.05
Pre-School Learning	16.05	Soccer	27.25
Number Magic	16.95	Video Games 1	23.25
Early Reading	32.25	Mind Challengers	23.25
Music Maker	32.25	Hunt the Wumpus	23.25
Addition/Subtract I	32.25	Video Chess	45.75
Addition/Subtract II	32.25	US Football	22.35
Multiplication I	32.25	A-MAZE-ING	22.35
Physical Fitness	18.75	Blackjack/Poker	22.35
Household Money Mgmt.	23.25	Zero Zap	22.35
Statistics	41.25	Hangman	22.35
Personal Rcd Keeping	45.75	Connect Four	22.35
Personal Rpt Generator	63.75	Yahtzee	27.25
Speech Editor	32.25	TI-Invasors	36.75
Extended Basic	90.25	Attack	27.75
Editor/Assembler	104.25	Blasto	23.25
Hustle	27.25	Tombstone City	36.75
Car Wars	23.25	Tunnels of Doom	36.75
Othello	36.75		

NB. The "Total Price" includes VAT & carr. & is all you pay. It represents a 10% discount on TI guide prices. 5 Different cassettes of 20 programs are available at £20 ea. total price. Peripherals/Accs. are at 10% discount - please enquire.

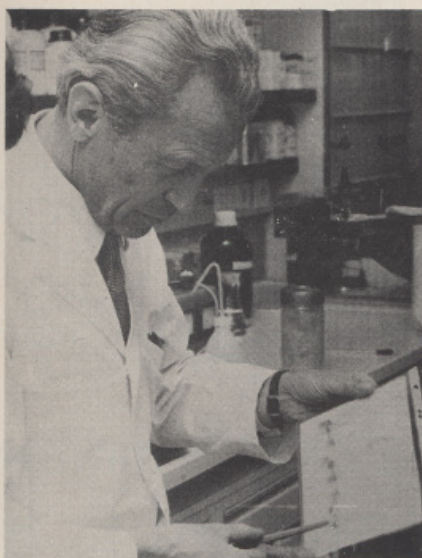
Orders to:

COMPUTERCONTACT (SALES)

22 Birchall Road, Rushden, Northants

Convenience phone (09 334) 56884 or 55673 6.0 pm to 9.0 pm and weekends
Prices may change without notice - Offers are subject to availability

Doctors



by then you may be dead. The vast majority of illness takes place in the community. It's a common misconception that health care takes place in hospitals. It doesn't. This is what makes the major difference." Dr. Sheldon's campaign to shift the burden of primary care back to the GP's surgery is perhaps a separate issue, but it does bear on his insistence that if computers are to be used in medicine, they must be thoroughly reliable and provide a wide range of facilities. At the same time, he argues that value-for-money is an essential criterion. A computer system should cost the GP no more than 50p per patient per annum to run; but the final results, he argues, if GP's were to be properly equipped with powerful computing systems, would be a tenfold improvement in the cost-effectiveness of the NHS. Dr. Sheldon speaks with some authority from his radical position. Over the past decade he has himself been a GP, a systems designer and now a researcher and lecturer. His own system, of which he sold on his own admission only one, comprised an Equinox Z-80 based machine with fixed and exchangeable disks, housekeeping and data back-up software, a high-grade printer and two VDUs.

Commercial sector

Is there a happy medium? Indeed, where to start? Doctors who feel that they should get into gear for the new age can do worse than get themselves down to the National Computing Centre, where several different systems for doctors are on display and can be demonstrated on request. In the commercially available sector, most packages major on age/sex registers, repeat prescriptions and comment files, cross-referred by some means. Additionally, some offer means of searching data files according to certain criteria – say, in order to screen all patients over the age of 65, who have a history of bronchitis, or who smoke, in order to inoculate them against a current strain of influenza.

One of the senior demonstrators at NCC

in New Fetter Lane, London is Eric Bagshaw. He told me that the doctors who enquired about computing generally fall into two categories: the older doctors who have read about computing and want to know what it can do for them, and the younger ones, possibly with some programming experience, who have already some firm idea of what they want a system for, and may even have a budget in mind. Mr Bagshaw makes the point that most GPs want to have lots of data on-line all the time the system is in use and broadly recommends that, in order to get full use of a system, the GP will need two terminals, one in his consulting room and one in his receptionist's area. Realistically, he reckons, the budget has to bust £3,000 for an entry-level system.

One of the most popular features he is asked about is full-text word processing. Many doctors develop certain idiosyncracies in writing up their clinical notes and do not see why the adoption of the computer should change their working habits. This is of course inordinately costly of memory and demands high-grade word-processing. At the same time, it represents a big investment in man-hours. A four-doctor practice might well have a panel of 10,000 patients; to enter full notes retrospectively would take a full-time typist some six months. The system would cost in excess of £10,000. Some of the packages we looked at had the disadvantage that records could only be accessed by patient codes: this is obviously fine for security purposes, though it means having a "crib-card" to hand. Admittedly this will usually be on the patient's card notes, which are unlikely to be replaced altogether by the computer. One suggestion is that the computer would print out a brief summary of notes, with the old manual card file kept for notes written out in full, correspondence with hospitals and other documents such as hospital reports and X-rays which are difficult, or expensive, to reproduce and/or store in a computer.

Simple systems

It is not difficult to work out how fast note-taking uses up memory: if you reckon that even an average set of notes would require 1,000 characters, and if there are 2,000 patients, you're into 2MB of data, strongly arguing the case for a machine which will support fixed and removable disks – the Comart Communicator, or the Rair Black Box (MP/M) for example. Even so, a software package written for the Communicator by Xitan Systems of Southampton (who are associated with Comart) and described as Medidata, requires that patient notes be "tokenised". This in turn compels the doctor to be rigorous. This takes us back to the starting point: you can only exploit a computer to the full if your inputs are unambiguous. In software writing terms it may be a good wheeze to assign meanings to certain keys in order to perform patient management searches (Xitan describe them as "switches") but a GP has an urgent need to get on with the job and has little time, unless he be an enthusiast, for user-savage programs. As Tim de Dombal puts it: "Simple systems are less of a threat. You must carry the doctor with you."

"Computing in General Practice"

Anyone contemplating writing a medical software package of any kind would be well advised to consult the British Medical Association, who in 1980 commissioned a study by Scicon Consultancy International on "Computing in General Practice". The study homes in directly on microcomputers, rejecting mainframes and bureau services as "inappropriate", but warns that quick action must be taken to avoid a proliferation of incompatible systems. It reviews systems currently in use, including conclusions drawn from in-depth interviews with users, detailed design considerations of hardware, software and communications, and goes on to recommend a jointly-funded pilot scheme to place 100 micros in general practices.

From the doctor's point of view, it gives a list of considerations for purchase, including a specimen maintenance agreement with the supplier. From the systems designer's point of view, it draws up a very detailed modular approach to analysing and implementing a full GP system, including a table to calculate memory size required by any particular size of practice, along with future possibilities which should be borne in mind when specifying hardware.

The research is thorough, based as it is on existing practice needs and doctors' expressed requirements, and the grasp of the subject is firm from both the computing and the applications side. It is also lucidly written. It costs £10 from the BMA, Tavistock Square, London WC2, which is peanuts for what is effectively a functional blueprint.



WE HAVE MOVED

MicroComputer Printout has moved!

Our new address is:

P. O. Box 2, Goring,
Reading RG8 9LN

Our new telephone number is:
(049162) 798

All correspondence should be addressed as above with immediate effect.

ZX 81

UTILITIES

Tim Hartnell refutes the claim that the ZX81 is merely a toy – with eight useful utilities that all run in 1K.

The ZX81 is often criticized for being little more than a toy. Certainly, say these critics, it is not a 'real computer'. Such criticism is unfounded. With a little work, the ZX81 can be made to perform quite useful and complex tasks.

This month we look at a few utility and demonstration programs to give an indication of the variety of ways in which the Sinclair micro can be used. All the programs in this article, by the way, fit within 1K.

The first program solves cubic equations – of the form:

$$f(x) = ax^3 + bx^2 + cx + d$$

by the Newton method. The second program is much simpler, and calculates the remainder after a division. The prompts in this program are self-explanatory, and the sample run shows it in action.

The third program is a useful statistics one, which finds the area under a curve of normal distribution, at the point which you enter for X at line 20. This is accurate only to about 10^{-4} .

Program number four is a demonstration program, which uses the very simple Sinclair BASIC string-handling commands to 'count' in words from zero to 99. The sample run shows the computer counting from zero to 21. It is very easy to make this a continuous demonstration by adding 130 RUN to the program.

Program five converts temperatures from Celsius to Fahrenheit. Once you have run it a few times, change it to convert from Fahrenheit to Celsius.

The next two programs are ones which demonstrate the ZX81's PLOTting ability. You should experiment with these programs, changing the STEP size, and the numbers used in them to multiply and add to the PLOT co-ordinates, to make the programs your own. You'll find it very addictive, and will spend far more time than you should fiddling with the programs.

The first one is a series of sine curves which are first plotted to produce the result shown in the sample run, then unplotted curve by curve to leave a blank screen. Again a 70 RUN line will turn this into a

continuous demonstration.

The second one, written by Colin Hughes, plots a very effective 'solid' sine wave, as you can see from the sample run. Once you've got it running as listed, modify it so that it first PLOTS the curve, then UNPLOTS it.

The final program in this month's article shows a way of manipulating figures which represent money. Apart from half-pence, you do not need to manipulate money beyond the second decimal place. This little program shows, in line 40, how to handle the money so only two decimal places are printed, and so that the final place is 'rounded up'. The INT function, as you'll discover if you omit the +.5 from line 40, does not round up, but changes a number to the next lowest whole number.

I hope these routines will give you some ideas to work on, and can be used by you as strong arguments the next time somebody dares to say: "Yes, but that ZX81 is only a toy!"

```

10 REM *CUBIC EQUATION*
20 INPUT A
30 INPUT B
40 INPUT C
50 INPUT D
60 INPUT J
70 INPUT E
80 INPUT F
90 LET G=E
100 LET X=2
110 LET I=A*E**3+B*E**2+C*E+D
120 LET E=E+F
130 LET X=X-1
140 IF X=0 THEN GOTO 170
150 LET H=I
160 GOTO 110
170 LET I=(I-H)/F
180 LET H=G-H/I
190 IF ABS (H-G) < J THEN GOTO 22
200 LET E=H
210 GOTO 90
220 PRINT "X=";G

```

Program 1

```

10 REM *CALCULATION OF REMAINDER*
15 PRINT "ENTER NUMBER TO BE DIVIDED"
20 INPUT A
25 PRINT A; " DIVIDED BY?"
30 INPUT B
35 CLS
40 PRINT A; " DIVIDED BY ";B; " IS ";INT (A/B); " AND ";A-B*INT (A/B); " REMAINDER"
50 PAUSE 4E4
55 CLS
60 RUN

ENTER NUMBER TO BE DIVIDED
467773 DIVIDED BY?
467773 DIVIDED BY 8 IS 58471 AND 5 REMAINDER

```

Program 2



```

10 REM *NORMAL DISTRIBUTION*
20 INPUT X
30 LET T=1/(1+0.231642*X)
40 LET Q=1/SQR (2*PI)*EXP (-X*
*2/2)
50 LET A=0.319382
60 LET B=-0.355564
70 LET C=1.781480
80 LET D=-1.821256
90 LET E=1.330274
100 PRINT "PX="; 1-Q*(A*T+B*T**2
+C*T**3+D*T**4+E*T**5)

```

Program 3

```

30 LET T$=" ZERO ONE TWO
THREE FOUR FIVE SIX SEVEN EI
GHT NINE "
40 FOR Z=0 TO 9
50 FOR X=0 TO 9
60 LET K=1+6*Z
70 IF Z=0 THEN LET Q$=""
75 IF Z<>0 THEN LET Q$=T$(K TO
K+5)
80 LET K=1+6*X
90 LET Q$=Q$+T$(K TO K+5)
95 SCROLL
100 PRINT Q$
110 NEXT X
120 NEXT Z

ZERO
ONE
TWO
THREE
FOUR
FIVE
SIX
SEVEN
EIGHT
NINE
ONE ZERO
ONE ONE
ONE TWO
ONE THREE
ONE FOUR
ONE FIVE
ONE SIX
ONE SEVEN
ONE EIGHT
ONE NINE
TWO ZERO
TWO ONE

```

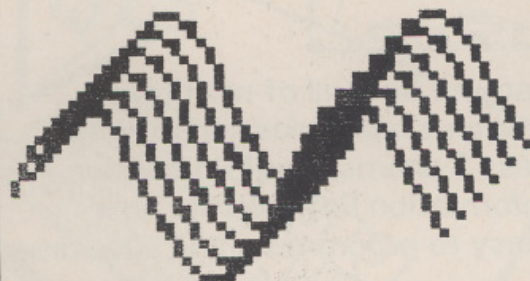
Program 4

```

10 REM *CELSIUS TO FAHRENHEIT*
20 PRINT "CELSIUS TEMPERATURE?"
"
30 INPUT CEL
40 LET FAH=1.8*CEL+32
50 PRINT CEL;" DEGREES CELSIUS
EQUALS"
60 PRINT FAH;" DEGREES FAHRENH
EIT"

```

Program 5



```

5 FOR D=1 TO 2
10 FOR A=0 TO 10 STEP 2
20 FOR X=0 TO 10 STEP .1
30 IF D=1 THEN PLOT S=X+A,10*S
IN (X)+10+A
35 IF D=2 THEN UNPLOT S=X+A,10
*SIN (X)+10+A
40 NEXT X
50 NEXT A
60 NEXT D

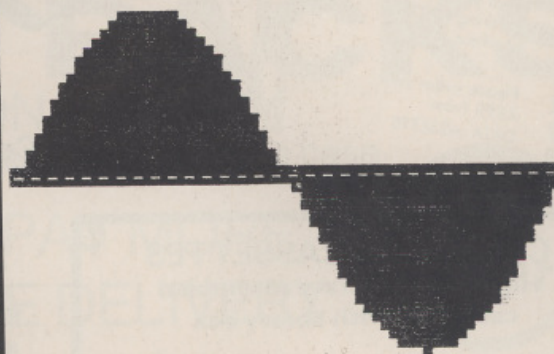
```

Program 6

```

10 FOR X=0 TO 63
20 LET Y=20*SIN (X/32*PI)
30 IF Y=0 THEN GOTO 70
40 FOR N=0 TO Y STEP SGN Y
50 PRINT X,N+22
60 NEXT N
70 NEXT X
80 PRINT AT 10,0:"-----"

```



Program 7

```

PRICE PER DOZEN (IN £)?
AT £77 PER DOZEN
THE PRICE EACH IS £6.42
6.4166667

```

```

10 REM *MONEY MANIPULATION*
15 PRINT "PRICE PER DOZEN (IN
£)?"
20 INPUT A
30 PRINT "AT £";A;" PER DOZEN"
40 PRINT "THE PRICE EACH IS £"
;INT ((A/12)*100+.5)/100
50 PRINT A/12

```

Program 8

Cassette Users: Everything
you need for enhancing your
**SINCLAIR
ZX80/81**

ANNOUNCING

data-assette®

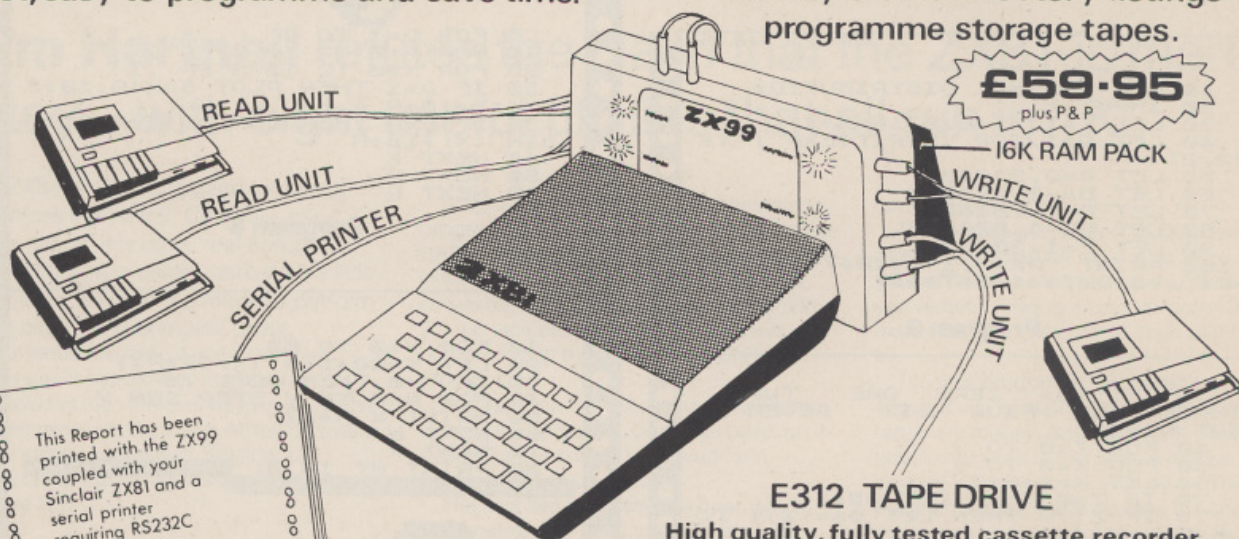
44, Shroton Street
London NW1
Tel: 01-258 0409

Programme Control of multiple
input/output tapes plus serial printer.
Business Systems, Word Processing
and Information Retrieval are now
fast, easy to programme and save time.

ZX99+ AUTOMATIC TAPE DRIVE CONTROLLER + SUPER SOFTWARE

- ★ Programme Control for 1 to 4 cassette recorders
- ★ Interface directly to any serial printer (RS232C)
- ★ Single USR command tape to tape copy
- ★ Auto-matically create directory listings of programme storage tapes.

£59.95
plus P & P



This Report has been
printed with the ZX99
coupled with your
Sinclair ZX81 and a
serial printer
requiring RS232C
interface.

Please order your
ZX99 from
DATA-ASSETTE

E312 TAPE DRIVE

High quality, fully tested cassette recorder
ideal for use with your ZX81, also fully tested with
BBC, ACORN etc.

£25
inc P & P

Tape
Counter

Ear
Aux
Mic/
Remote
sockets

battery
mains

record light



COMPUTER CASSETTES

High quality screw assembled
cassettes with library box

All lengths available (see below)
inc. C15 leaderless



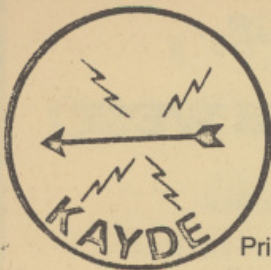
COMPUTER CASSETTES	QTY	PRICE	TOTAL	ITEM	QTY	Price inc P & P	TOTAL
C5		35p		ZX99 Automatic Tape Controller + Super Software		£62.90	
C10		37p		E312 Cassette Tape Drive		£25.00	
C12		38p		Cheque/PO payable to Storkrose Ltd. or Charge my Access/Visa card no:			
C15		39p					
C20		41p					
C25		43p					
C30		44p					
C15 Leaderless		£1.00					
Add min £1.50 or 10% P & P				SIGNED _____			

ORDER FORM TO:
DATA-ASSETTE, Dept.MP1
44 Shroton Street,
London NW1 6UG Tel: 01-258 0409
Telephone enquiries welcome

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TRADE ENQUIRIES welcome from any country!

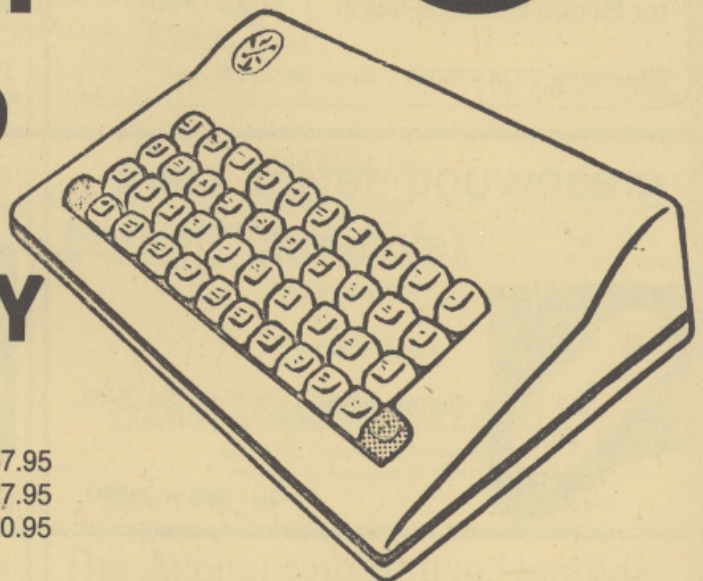


Price

ZX 80/1 WAR!

£37.95
inc. VAT

ZX KEYBOARD FULLY CASED with REPEAT KEY



FULLY CASED KEYBOARD
UNCASED KEYBOARD
KEYBOARD CASE

£37.95
£27.95
£10.95

This is a highly professional keyboard using executive buttons as found on top quality computers. It has a REPEAT KEY and comes complete in its own LUXURY CASE. This is a genuine professional KEYBOARD and should not be confused with toy keyboards currently available on the market.

16K RAM PACKS

MASSIVE ADD ON MEMORY
comes complete in its own luxury black slimline case

WHY WAIT TO PAY MORE
FAST IMMEDIATE DELIVERY

£32.95
inc. VAT

POST TO:
DEPT. MC 1
KAYDE ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS
48/49 EXMOUTH ROAD,
GREAT YARMOUTH,
NORFOLK NR30 3DP
TEL: 0493-57867

FOR SUPER FAST DELIVERY
JUST PHONE US WITH YOUR
CREDIT CARD NUMBER

Please send me RAM Packs @ £32.95 each
Please send me Cased Keyboards @ £37.95 each
Please send me Uncased Keyboards @ £27.95 each
Please send me Keyboard Case @ £10.95 each

I ENCLOSE £

NAME:

ADDRESS:

Please add £2.00 P&P for Keyboards
£1.50 P&P for RAM Packs

AND MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO
KAYDE ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS

All products include VAT and are fully built and tested. All products come with a complete money back guarantee

P P M Computing Limited

4 Bridge Street, Caversham, Reading, England.

Computer Modelling, Consultancy & Training
Authorised **ACT** microcomputer distributor

Your Sirius Dealer

for Berks, Bucks & Oxon



PPM

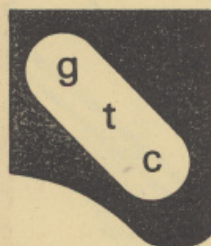
Telephone: 0734 475015 Telex: 847172 Projen

**SIRIUS
IN
THE NORTH WEST**

Holdene Ltd.,
82A Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire

Tel: 0625-529486

Telex: 556319


**greenwood taylor clark
(systems) limited**


Warren Street, Sheffield S4 7WR.

0742 - 77600 or 754883

specialists in accounting & systems equipment
79 Overstone Road, Northampton NN1 3JW
Telephone: Northampton 39660



Ford & Wright Limited

SIRIUS IN DERBY
**Donington
Computers**

114a Friar Gate,
Derby
Tel: Derby 49672

**SIRIUS
IN
SCOTLAND**

Holdene Microsystems Ltd.,
48 Great King's Street,
Edinburgh
Tel: 031-557 4060
Telex: 556319



SIRIUS 1 dealers in
the North of Scotland

Full Engineering Support



21 Bon Accord Street, Aberdeen AB1 2EA
Tel: (0224) 22520 Telex: 739740

MANCHESTER MICROS

The Sirius 1 dealer in the North West

Tel: 061-832 5553
Royal Exchange, Manchester M2 7BT

**SIRIUS
IN
YORKSHIRE**

Holdene Limited,
Manchester Unity House,
11/12 Rampart Road,
Woodhouse, Leeds 6
Tel: 0532-459459
Telex: 556319


TREWYN TECHNOLOGY

TREWYN
ABERGAVENNY
GWENT. NP7 7PG

Telephone: 087382-222
and 0633-59276/7
Telex: 497385 SEYMOS G

CONCEPT COMPUTERS LTD.



for further information on the Sirius 1,
or a demonstration

445 Hackney Road, London E2 9DY
Tel: 01-729 1800

HELISTAR SYSTEMS LTD.



150 Weston Road,
Aston Clinton,
Aylesbury,
Bucks HP22 5EP

Tel: 0296 630364



**WILSON, HUGHES & PARTNERS
(DATA SCIENCES) LIMITED**

Professional Training &
Support provided in London
area, Bucks, Berks, Middx
and Herts. Please ring for
further information.

**18 Chequers Square,
Uxbridge, Middlesex
UB8 1LN**
Telephone Uxbridge 53332

SIRIUS 1

The most advanced microcomputer in the world, now
available for demonstration in the South of England.
We can arrange a demonstration in our office or on your
own premises.

Please contact:

CASTLE MICROSYSTEMS LTD.

NORTHNEY MARINA, NORTHNEY ROAD,
HAYLING ISLAND, HANTS. PO11 0NH

Telephone 07016 2188

Telex 847482

POSEIDON COMPUTER SERVICES LTD.



**OF HAMPTON
S.W. LONDON DEALER
FOR SIRIUS 1**

DEMONSTRATIONS BY APPOINTMENT

(At any time, including evenings and weekends)

BESPOKE SOFTWARE A SPECIALITY

Competitive Prices

Full U.K. delivery and export enquiries welcome

TEL: 01-941 1447/5986

TELEX: 8954665 GITS



The Accounting House Limited

For Professional Advice & Support

Administration & Training Centre:

**Yateley Lodge, Reading Road, Yateley,
Camberley, Surrey GU17 7AA**

Telephone: **YATELEY**
MORDEN
SOUTHAMPTON

0252 877584
01-640 9331
0703 38903

Accounting? Word processing? Financial Modelling?

GET SERIOUS - GET SIRIUS

For the ACT Sirius 1 in West and North-West London

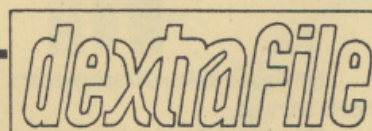
COMPUTALINE

01 - 840 - 1177

**St. James' House,
West Ealing,**

**105-113 The Broadway,
London W13 9BL**

SIRIUS IN LANCASHIRE



Approved ACT
distributors since
1979.

Hardware, software,
complete systems
and bureau services

Dextrafile Limited

Guardian House, 42 Preston New Road,
Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 6AH

Telephone: 0254 - 662114/676195



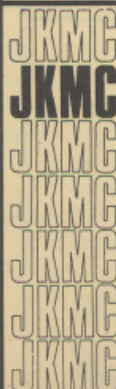
STEMMOS LTD

344 Kensington High Street,
LONDON W14.
Telephone: 01-602 6242 (3 lines)
Telex: 893003

**The SIRIUS 1 Dealer in
Central and West End of London**

Full engineering support for:

- * Structural Analysis
- * Construction and Estimating
- * Soil Mechanics and Foundations
- * Off Shore and Shelves
- * Pipe Stress Analysis



**Enterprises, Bay House, The Paddocks,
Upper Breeding, West Sussex**

Authorised dealer for South Surrey and the whole of Sussex.
Suppliers of package and bespoke software.

Resources include accountants, electronics engineers,
telecommunications engineers, programs and systems
analysts.

Contact main office - Steyning (0903) 812735

More bytes than an Apple
Cleverer tricks than a PET
*** ACT Sirius 1 ***
Now available
at

NAME

ADDRESS

Causey Buildings
61 High Street, Gosforth
Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 4AA

SIMPLEC COMPUTERS

TELEPHONE

(0632) 852719

Distributors for **ACT Series 800** microprocessors for business
accounting and word processing.

**SERVICING MERSEYSIDE, WIRRAL
CHESHIRE AND NORTH WALES**

KM computing

11A. Bridge Road, West Kirby, Wirral, Merseyside.
Telephone: 051-625 1020

B and D Computing
Computer Service Bureau

29 Pound Road
Highworth
Swindon
Wilts SN6 7LA



0793 762789



Midland Micro



Minster Microcomputers

12 York Street,
Stourport-on-Severn, Worcs
Tel: Stourport 77098

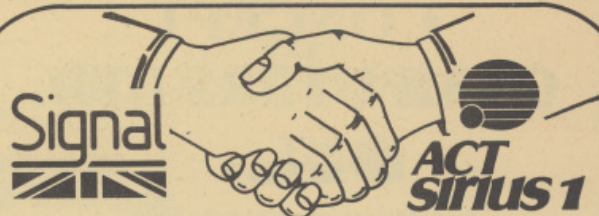
Specialists in custom written software
Hardware maintenance available
See the Sirius 1 on display now in our
demonstration suite

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND



MAIDSTONE (0622) 58289

ADVANCED COMPUTER SERVICES LTD.
5-11 LONDON ROAD
MAIDSTONE
KENT



The Number One Combination.

Signal software includes:
Motor trade packages - Accounts
Payroll - etc. etc. etc.

Signal Software is tailor-
made to your requirements and
is entirely user friendly. To find
out more, please phone



Number One for Sirius 1

Tower House,
Fishergate, York
YO1 4UA

Tel: (0904) 36578



SPECIAL SPRINGTIME OFFERS QWERTY COMPUTER SERVICES

20 Worcester Rd, Newton Hall, Durham
Tel: (0385) 67045

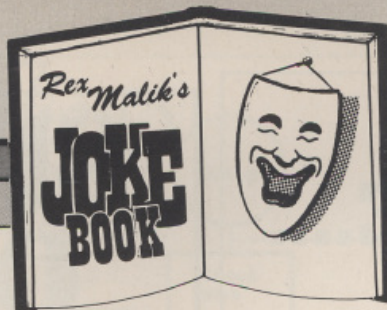
- P.1 ROM 'n RAM** £30 was £35
4k RAM which can be switched into ROM mode. No need
for ROM board extenders; dump the chip contents to disk
or tape then load as required.
- P.2 PROGRAMMABLE SOUND GENERATOR**
£30 was £35
3 voice output, white noise etc. Make your own special
sound effects - CB2 sound also available - no need for
any other sound unit.
- P.3 EXTENDED BASIC 4**
Add **25** new Keywords to Commodore Basic.
(a) £30 Single ROM (SYS called)
(b) £35 2 ROM Set (Interpreter uses B ROM)

State whether A or 9 chip required
Basic 3 + 2 versions being prepared

PRICES EXCLUDE £1.40 P&P and VAT at 15%
Barclaycard and Access cards accepted - anytime

Many other products available - send S.A.E. for catalogue

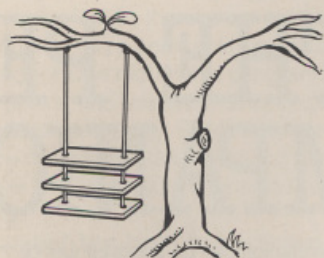
Qwerty



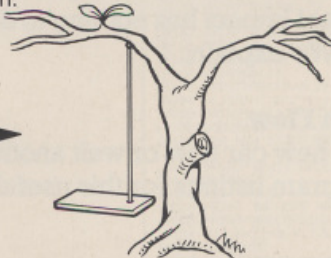
The seventies of course were the time which saw the rise of consultancies, in which others besides computer manufacturers became involved in systems specification and design.

You know what a consultant is, don't you? Herbert V. Krochnow defined a consultant as "A man who knows less about your business than you do and gets more for telling you how to run it than you could possibly make out of it even if you ran it right instead of the way he told you."

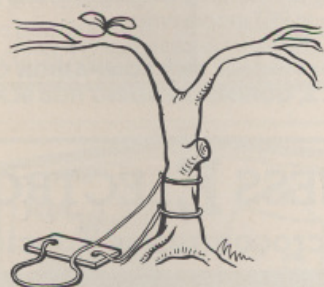
It was best put in the graphic form below by someone who had actually tried to implement a consultant's specification.



1. Consultant's original design



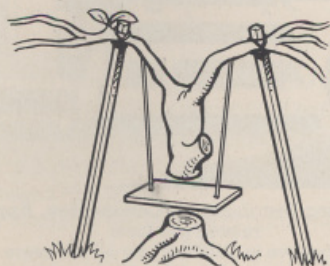
2. Revised design after costing.



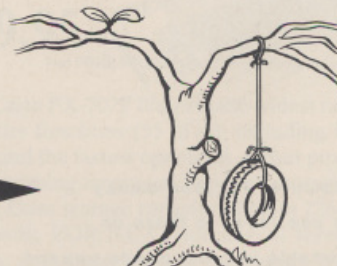
3. What the spec. said.



4. Team's implementation of the spec.



5. Hand-over version.



6. What the client needed.

The idea of the computer is itself a very powerful one. It was to be expected therefore that in searching for analogies, people should go to those also powerful sources, the Bible and The Book of Common Prayer.

And what could be more powerful than those opening words of Genesis. "In the Beginning...." So Iann Barron of INMOS once began a speech by updating the first half a dozen verses. "In the beginning was IBM..."

In the 70's, a UK systems house became involved in systems software for a famous manufacturer. And one of the things they produced was the following.

In the Beginning was the idea, and then the specification.

And the idea was without form, and the specification, it was void.

And darkness was upon the faces of the Programmers.

And they spake unto their Leading Programmer, saying: 'It is a load of crap, and smelleth as of a sewer.'

And the Leading Programmer took pity upon his vassals and spake to the Senior Programmer:

'It is a cartful of turds, and none may abide the odour thereof.'

NEXT ISSUE....

Electronic Mail

Just a vision of the future, or can you already send letters over the telephone? State-of-the-Art report.

BBC Computer

Everyone agrees the BBC is a very advanced machine. But its real impact has nothing to do with its specification. We explain.

Discounted Cash Flow

Should you buy a new car now or wait another six months? Full program listings for this useful costing technique.

Sharp PC15

This amazing new pocket computer even sports a 4 colour printer with plotter, but what can you really use it for.

All this and more in the June issue of



SPECIAL OFFER

1/3 OFF

THE PET COMPANION

Yes. The PET Companion can be yours for just £6.75, that's £6.30 + 45p UK postage. But hurry – offer expires May 31st.

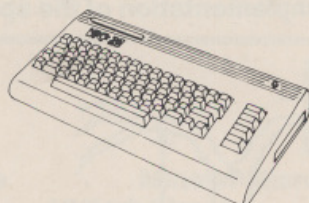
The PET COMPANION is a compilation of all the PET material published in the first volume of *MicroComputer Printout* including 105 PET programming hints and tips and 27 major articles on PET programming.

Send cheque or Access/Visa No. to:

MicroComputer Printout, PET COMPANION OFFER,
P.O. BOX 2, GORING, READING RG8 9LN

VIC 20

THE BEST VALUE HOME COMPUTER YET



more computer for less money
easy to use ideal to learn on
yet fully expandable as your needs expand
but most of all easy on your pocket
at only £199.99 inc VAT

for a comprehensive range of hardware and software
full after sales service, credit facilities
and free home demonstrations

ring GEMINI now on

Farnborough 543830 or Brookwood 81381

anytime

Access and Barclaycard welcome

approved Commodore dealer

BUSINESS ELECTRONICS

'The Microcomputer Specialists'



The South's leading Distributor for Commodore, Apple II and all related products

We believe in SUPPORT for all our users.

We stock
EQUIPMENT
PARTS
SOFTWARE
SUPPLIES

We also provide
ADVICE
PROGRAMMING
REPAIRS
EXCHANGES

from all leading suppliers

Micro-Magic is now here! Come and see us
at Debenham's, Southampton.

We have over 60 years' accumulated experience in computers, electronic engineering and systems.

We can supply all your proven hardware and software accessories for your PET & APPLE systems.

xxx AND NOW VIC-20! xxx

Discounts for C.W.O., Educational Establishments and cash purchase
Call us on Southampton (0703) 738248

Business Electronics
Rownhams House, Rownhams, Southampton, Hants

Documentation

error – then you will get some really weird results!

One more table – a list of subroutines. This should include *all* subroutines in the program, saying what they do, which variables they expect as their inputs and what outputs they produce. One of the commonest errors involving subroutines is sending the required information – but in the wrong variable, especially easy if arrays are involved.

The final form of documentation I am going to mention is the REM statement. The poor old REM gets my vote for the most abused statement in BASIC. With the exception of maybe 8K PETs, 3.5K VICs and 1K ZX81s, *every* program has room for some REM statements, especially when the program is being developed. If a program is so big that there is no room for REMs, then you are a bad programmer: the program should have been split up into manageable chunks long ago. Huge monolithic programs are pigs to test, run very slowly and are awful to debug if they break down. You should always put REMs in when you start a program – you can always take them out later, but when a program is new and unreliable they can save an awful lot of pencil sucking.

This discussion has been mainly aimed at BASIC programmers, but it is all applicable to those who use assembly language, with the additional note that as comment in an assembler program is free, there is no excuse for not using as many as possible. As assembly language is lower level than BASIC, intricate routines can be even more puzzling when you come back to them, so adequate documentation is absolutely essential.

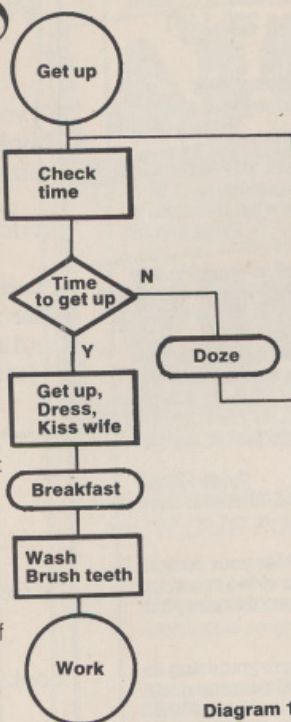
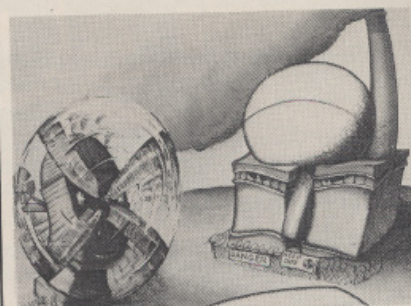
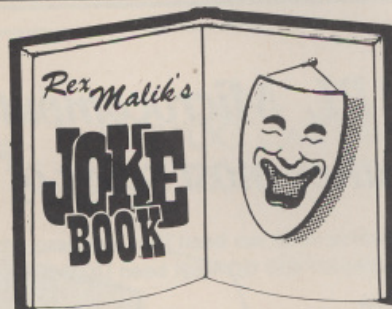


Diagram 1



```

10200 REM ENORMOUS FALL OFF
10220 PRINT "REDUNDANCIES AFFECT YOUR RUNNING COSTS"
10225 X=INT(0(J)*1+RND(1)/3): IF X=0(J) THEN X=X+2
10230 PRINT "FROM 0(J) MILLION POUNDS TO"
10235 0(J)=X: RETURN
10300 REM INFLATIONARY WAGE CLAIMS
10310 IF EVOK(1)<EV(0) THEN RETURN
10320 PRINT "COMING TO THE RISE IN ENERGY PRICES."
10330 PRINT "THERE ARE PRICE RISES IN MOST ENERGY"
10340 PRINT "RUNNING COSTS..."
10345 PRINT TAB(15); "MID(K); TAB(18); 0(K)+1
10350 FOR J=0 TO 1
10360 PRINT#(J);
10370 PRINT#(15); 0(J);
10380 0(J)=INT(0(J)*1+RND(1)/10)
10385 PRINT#(20); 0(J); NEXT J
10390 GOSUB 10000: RETURN
10400 REM NEW DISCOVERY BOOSTS SHARES
10410 V(J,K+1)=INT(V(J,K)*1+RND(1)/ND*3))+1
10420 PRINT "THIS NEWS MAY PUSH UP SHARE PRICES !"
10430 RETURN
10500 REM SOURCE RUNS OUT
10510 PRINT "THERE ARE NO MORE SUPPLIES OF "H(J)
10520 PRINT "ACCORDINGLY THE INDUSTRY HAS SHUT DOWN."
10530 V(J,K+1)=0: P(J,K+1)=0: R(J)=0: R2(J)=0
10540 GOTO 4187
15000 PRINT "*****"
15010 PRINT "THE SHORTAGE OF ENERGY HAS CAUSED THE"
15020 PRINT "FRAME WORK OF BRITISH SOCIETY TO BREAK"
15030 PRINT "APART. DISASTER AND REVOLUTION !"
15035 PRINT "THERE IS NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT !"
15038 PRINT "YOU KEPT THE UK GOING UNTIL 'DOK'."
15040 PRINT "END OF GAME. THANK YOU FOR PLAYING."
15050 PRINT "I SHALL DISPLAY THE FINAL SHARE VALUES"
15060 PRINT "SO YOU CAN SEE WHO CAME OUT OF IT BEST."
15070 GOSUB 10000
15080 29=1: RETURN
    
```



And so the Senior Programmer spake unto the Consultant, saying: 'It is a container of excrement and it is very strong, so that none may abide before it.'

The Consultant then hurried unto the Senior Consultant, and addressed him thus:

'It is a vessel of fertiliser, and none may abide its strength.'

The Senior Consultant carried these words to his Supervising Consultant and spake to him, saying:

'It containeth that which aids the growth of plants, and it is very strong.'

And so it was the the Supervising Consultant rejoiced and delivered the good news unto his manager:

'It promoteth growth, and it is very powerful.'

Knowing that the Managing Director was saddened of heart and in dire need of encouragement, the Manager rushed to his side and joyously exclaimed:

'It is upwardly compatible to several Gigabytes, switches 50K voice grade lines in tenths of a nanosecond, and can translate the Chronical into Japanese.'

And the Managing Director looked up the new system, and said:

'It is a load of crap, and smelleth as of a sewer.'



The Scientific Computer CASIO FX-702P POCKET COMPUTER

ONLY
£99.95

Plus FREE MiCROL Professional Programming Pack (RRP £9.95)

The Casio FX-702P features the widest range of math, science and statistics functions (55 in all, including Regression and Correlation) and the fastest operation. Other power features are:- BASIC programming language; Program storage capacity of up to 1,680 steps; Data storage capacity of up to 226 memories; Subroutines: 10 levels; FOR:NEXT looping: 8 levels. Comprehensive edit, debug and trace modes. 240 hours battery life. Dimensions: 17x165x82mm. Weight 176g.

FA-2 Cassette Adaptor with remote control, for bulk program/data storage £19.95

FP-10 Permanent hard copy printer. 20 character width, 2 lines/second £44.95

MiCROL 702 PROCOS 'Visicalc-type' system answers 'what if' questions and analyses trends. On ready-to-run cassette, with user manual.

Exclusive to TEMPUS £74.95

SYSTEM PRICES – Save up to £40 on RRP

PACK A: FX702P + MiCROL Professional Programming Pack	£99.95
PACK B: FX-702P + FA-2 cassette interface + PPP + PROCOS	£139.95
PACK C: FX-702P + FP-10 Printer + FA-2 + PPP + PROCOS	£179.95

Casio FX-702P Programmable Calculator. Compatible with the FA-2 and FP-10 £74.95

Details on Request

PRICE includes VAT, P&P. Delivery normally by return of post
Send your Company Order, Cheque, postal order or phone your Access, Visa or Barclaycard number to the UK's leading CASIO specialists:

TEMPUS

Dept. MCP
38 Burleigh Street, Cambridge
CB1 1DG. Tel: 0223 312866

We repair PET and APPLE computer systems. For first class service call our maintenance office on 250-1481.

The Dr. Watson Book of Assembly Language Programming

This is a new teach-yourself guide to machine language programming for 2-3-4-8000 PETS. **Price £10.00**

AD100
4-channel A/D Converter. A single board converter with on-board power supply. Works on any PET or computer with a parallel port. Now you can let your computer touch, see, feel, and sense what is around it. Comes complete with instruction manual. **Price £55.00**

AD-50
1-channel single board AD/DA converter. Designed to work on any computer with a parallel port. 50,000 samples/sec. Requires power supply. Comes as kit. No software included. **Price £27.50**

PET TV Interface
This well-built unit connects to either your domestic TV or monitor. Nothing to adjust. Connects to the PET user port and a second cassette port. For 40 and 80 column PETS. **Price £35.00**

RL100
This is a six-channel relay switching unit with on-board power supply. Relay rating is 1A at 30V DC/100V AC. **Price £50.00**

We also build higher ratings and solid state switches. Phone or send s.a.e. for details.

VC100
This is a random access video controller. VC100 enables your computer to keep an index of the recordings you have on your video recorder. You can then under software control, rewind, fast forward to any position on your video tape. Send s.a.e. for details.

CB-2 Soundbox
Ideal sound box for your PET. Comes complete with programming instructions and demo tape. Plugs into PET user port and cassette port. **Price £17.50**

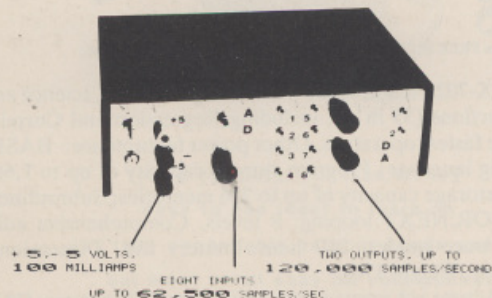
PEDRO COMPUTER SERVICES

We also supply a selection of VIC computer games and hardware. Please send s.a.e. for details.

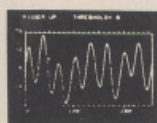
Carr. £1.50 P&P per item. Dealer enquiries welcome.
4 Cowcross Street,
London E.C.1.
01-250 1481

ORTHOLOG 181

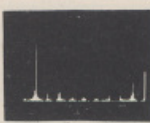
The complete analogue interface for your Pet



ALSO AVAILABLE: **OSCILLOSCOPE 81**
FOR DISPLAY OF DATA AT RATES BETWEEN 200 AND 1,000 SAMPLES/SEC. VARIABLE TRIGGER AND FREQUENCY ANALYSIS FACILITIES ARE INCLUDED. THIS PROGRAM IS SUITABLE FOR 20, 30, 40 SERIES PETS (977, 1277) (PLEASE STATE MODEL), WITH AN 80-COLUMN VERSION TO APPEAR.



OSCILLOSCOPE 82
FOR PETS WITH HI-RES. BOARDS (FROM 1.0 TO 40,000 SAMPLES/SECOND, WITH 256 POINTS SHOWN AT A TIME AND A VARIABLE TRIGGER LEVEL. LIDE "SCOPE 81". THIS PROGRAM INCLUDES A SPECTRUM ANALYSIS ROUTINE, BUT NOW ALL 128 FREQUENCY COMPONENTS CAN BE SHOWN.



FROM **£324**

CONTACT
ORTHOLOG LTD.
P.O. BOX 72,
EOWARE,
MIDDX. HA8 6RD
TEL. 01.952.2459

PLUS
HARDWARE
WE ALSO OFFER ITEMS SUCH AS
SINGLE-CHANNEL AND FOUR-
CHANNEL PRE-AMPLIFIERS
WITH GAINS OF 100 TO 500
TIMES, 12-BIT PLUG-IN UNITS
TO PROVIDE RESOLUTION OF
1 PART IN 4096, ETC.

What Can I Do With 1K?

If your answer is "not much", then you must read the new book from V & H, "What Can I Do With 1K?" (40 programs and routines for the 1K Sinclair ZX81).

Here at last our some serious (and some not so serious!) programs which can be run in 1K.

Don't be misled by the titles:

'Roulette' actually analyses gambling systems; 'Chinese Horoscope' reveals your birth sign, month sign, element and ascendant; 'Payroll' analyses all tax bands. These are not just simple programs.

FREE OFFER!!

A free listing of 'Chess in 1K' is included with all mail orders mentioning this magazine.

'What Can I Do With 1K?' is available from most bookshops, computer shops or direct from:

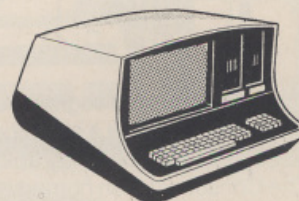
V & H Computer Services
182C Kingston Road,
Staines, Middlesex
Tel: Staines (0784) 58041

Price £4.95 and also available on cassette £4.95

*An APL Microcomputer
really makes most sense of all!*

WHAT IS APL?

APL is the most concise and productive computer language devised. A speed factor of 5-6 times is not overstating the case!
Add to this the fact that you do not have to be an expert programmer to use APL and you can see why many believe that APL will be the dominant language in the years to come.



STANDARD SUPERBRAIN FROM US \$3795

A wide range of applications software is available. For example: word-processing, database, statistics, communications, block graphics.

**Alan
Pearman
Limited**

Maple House
Mortlake Crescent
Chester
CH3 5UR
England
Tel: 0244-21084

Dealer Enquiries Welcome

SPRINTER

- 250 Times Faster!

Your computer can probably print at 2000 characters per second, but your printer is the slowest link in the chain. Now using the Mutek SPRINTER Interface, your computer can output without waiting for the printer. The output is stored in Sprinter until the printer is ready for it. Result!

Faster output; and no waiting for the printer for 20 minutes before you can use the computer again.

Sprinter is compatible with most serial, parallel or IEEE interfaces and requires *no changes* to your system.

The Universal interface

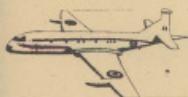
Since SPRINTER has its own intelligence and memory, it can easily be tailored to your needs. Converting from one interface standard to another; one data format to another or even both at the same time is usually easy and very cheap. Call us today for a solution to your problem.

Prices depend on specification and start at £165 for a serial to IEEE 16K Sprinter (printer spooler).

Remember it's much less than the extra cost of a faster printer.

Mutek

Quarry Hill, Box, Wilts
Tel: Bath (0225) 743289



Nimrod Software

**Has the program YOU need not been written yet?
Then YOU need NIMROD SOFTWARE.**

We specialise in bespoke programs for the Commodore Pet. Whatever your application you can feel confident that you will receive a really professional service. We follow a formal and well proven procedure which will assure your satisfaction:

1. A senior analyst will visit you to discuss your application and a detailed estimate will be sent to you.
2. When you order, your requirements will be analysed in fine detail and a full specification will be prepared.
3. When you are satisfied that the specification meets your requirements you will receive our **FIXED PRICE** quotation. This will not differ from the original estimate unless major alterations have been agreed during the preparation of the specification.
4. The programs will be written to the highest professional standards using advanced techniques and then very thoroughly tested.
5. Your programs will be fully **GUARANTEED** for ONE YEAR.

If the program you need is not available "off the shelf" then call **IAN DOLMAN** on 01-878 6498.



Nimrod Software - Practical and Efficient Programs for Micro Computers

ATOM

ZX81

VIC

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MICROCOMPUTER WITH OUR POPULAR RANGE OF PROVEN BOOKS:-

- ☐ **GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR ZX81**, by Tim Hartnell. Eighty plus programs in this 120-page book, including draughts. **£5.95**
- ☐ **20 SIMPLE ELECTRONIC PROJECTS FOR THE ZX81 and other computers** by Stephen Adams **£6.45**
- ☐ **SYMPHONY FOR A MELANCHOLY COMPUTER** by Tim Hartnell. 20 great Vic games **£6.95**
- ☐ **39 TESTED PROGRAMS FOR THE ACORN ATOM** Best of Interface **£6.45**
- ☐ **MASTERING MACHINE CODE ON YOUR ZX81 OR ZX80**, by Toni Baker. 180 pages, teaches machine code from first principles. **£7.50**
- ☐ **49 EXPLOSIVE GAMES FOR THE ZX81**, edited by Tim Hartnell. **£5.95**
- ☐ **PASCAL FOR HUMAN BEINGS** by Jeremy Ruston **£6.45**
- ☐ **34 AMAZING GAMES FOR THE 1K ZX81** by Alastair Gourlay **£4.95**
- ☐ **THE GATEWAY GUIDE TO THE ZX81 AND ZX80**, by Mark Charlton. Over 60 programs and routines, ZX BASIC explained in detail. **£6.45**
- ☐ **GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR ACORN ATOM**, by Trevor Sharples and Tim Hartnell. 184 pages, 80 programs, including draughts. **£7.95**
- ☐ **GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR VIC 20**, by Tim Hartnell, with over 60 programs to get your VIC up and running from day one. **£6.95**
- ☐ **INTERFACE**, the monthly magazine published by the National ZX80 and ZX81 Users' Club, in conjunction with the Independent Atom Users' Group, is just £9.50 (UK), £12.50 (Europe) for 12 issues. **Sample copy**, with many programs for each machine, book, software and hardware reviews, education, contact addresses, **just £1**.

Please send me the items marked. I enclose £

Name:

Address:

Postcode

Please make cheques payable to **INTERFACE** and send the above form, or a copy, to: **INTERFACE, Dept. MP, 44-46 Earls Court Road, London W8 6EJ**

Where to buy your CBM-PET



**MICRO
COMPUTER
CENTRE**

Virage Holding Co. Ltd.

28 Sheen Lane, London S.W.14.
Tel: 01-878 7044/5/6/7

DATALECT
COMPUTERS

32 Chertsey Road,
Woking, Surrey
Tel: Woking 21776/23637
A NEW SHOWROOM IN CROYDON
7 St. Georges Walk, Croydon,
Surrey Tel: 01-680 3581

AUGHTON
MICRO
SYSTEMS

Woodward Road, Kirkby,
Liverpool, L33 7UZ

Telephone: 051-548 6060

Telex: 628681

IBEK
SYSTEMS

COMPUTER SYSTEMS
COMPUTER PROGRAMMING
ELECTRONIC DEVELOPMENT
437 Stoney Stanton Road,
Coventry CV6 5EA,
West Midlands. Tel: (0203) 86449



EXECUTIVE REPROGRAPHIC
and Business Consultants Ltd.
2/4 Oxford Road,
MANCHESTER M1 5QA

Tel: 061-228 1637

CBS
CONSULTANTS

COMPUTER BUSINESS SYSTEMS
Hardware, Packaged and Bespoke
Software
75 Watery Lane, Birmingham B9 4HW.
Telephone: 021-772 8181 (7 Lines)

B&B

[Computers] Limited

The Consultants for the North West



SUITE 1,
124 NEWPORT STREET,
BOLTON BL3 6AB,
LANCASHIRE
Tel: (0204) 26644



TAL

(TYTHE AVIATION LIMITED)
COMPUTER DIVISION

Suppliers of alternative cassette decks with
counter and audio monitor.
11 HIGH STREET LEIGHTON BUZZARD BEDS
TELEPHONE LEIGHTON BUZZARD - 372114



Microchips
[Winchester]

MICROCOMPUTERS AND A
GREAT DEAL MORE
66 St George's Street Winchester
Hampshire SO23 8AH Tel: 0962 68085

HSV

BASINGSTOKE
(0256) 62444

adda

Adda Computers Ltd.

14 Broadway
West Ealing
London, W13 0SR Tel: 01-579 5845/8



KINGSLEY COMPUTERS LTD
132 DESBOROUGH RD HIGH WYCOMBE
BUCKS. HP11 2PU TEL (0494) 449749

SIRIUS
COMMUNICATIONS
SCIENTIFIC AND
ENGINEERING

please contact: SPECIALISTS
B. Desborough,
Millhouse Designs,
76 High Street, Alton, Hants
Tel: 0420 84517



Preston
Computer Centre

6 Victoria Buildings,
Fishergate, Preston.
Tel: 0772- 57684

L&J COMPUTERS
192 HONEYPOT LANE, QUEENSBURY,
MIDDX HA7 1EE. 01-204 7525

THE PET SPECIALISTS

COME AND SEE THE NEW **VIC-20** at £189 (inc VAT)

Available from stock

As well as a full range of Petsoft and
Commodore Software, we have some highly
reliable "Home Brewed" programs available.

LUTON
'PET SHOP'

Chiltern Computers

56/58 HASTINGS STREET
LUTON LU1 5BE, BEDS
0582-429951

MMS

Computer Systems

Registered Office:
26 Mill Street, Bedford MK40 3HH
TEL. 0234-40601

**PROFESSIONAL
COMPUTER
SERVICES LTD.**

143/145 Yorkshire Street,
Oldham, Lancs. OL1 3TH
Telephone: 061-624 4065

Sumlock
MANCHESTER.
commodore PET & VIC 20
DEALERS
Complete systems including
Maintenance contracts,
Software-Consumables &
Accessories.
198 Deansgate Manchester Tel 061 834 4233

**B BUSINESS
E ELECTRONICS**
'The Microcomputer Specialists'.
ROWNHAMS HOUSE, ROWNHAMS,
SOUTHAMPTON SO1 8AH
Telephone:
SOUTHAMPTON (0703) 738248

NORTH EAST
KEY
Vic-20
COMPUTER SERVICES LIMITED
Osborne House, 28 Osborne Road
Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 2AJ
Telephone (0632) 815157

BUSS STOP COMPUTERS
**Photo
Acoustics
Ltd.**
255a St. Albans Road
(entrance in Judge Street)
Watford Herts WD2 5BQ
Tel: Watford 40698

Jw
**J. R. WARD COMPUTERS
LIMITED**
35 Potters Lane
Kiln Farm
Milton Keynes MK11 3HG
Telephone No.
Milton Keynes
562850
(STD 0908)

ALPHA
Business Systems
Church Street,
Industrial Area
Ware
Hertfordshire.
Telephone: WARE (0920) 68926/7

MICRO FACILITIES
127 High Street, Hampton Hill,
Middlesex TW12 1NJ
Telephone: 01-979 4546 & 941-1197

CHROMASONIC electronics
48, Junction Road, Archway,
London N19 5RD, U.K.
Telephone: 01-263 9493/01-263 9495
STOCKISTS OF:
PET 4000 & 8000 SERIES,
APPLE EUROPLUS II SERIES
THE NEW VIC-20

Yorkshire Electronics
COMMODORE APPOINTED
COMMERCIAL SYSTEMS DEALER
NEW SHOWROOM NOW OPEN
CAXTON HOUSE,
17 FOUNTAIN STREET, MORLEY
WEST YORKSHIRE. TEL: 0532-522181
EYS

CSE
C.S.E. (COMPUTERS)
12 WOKINGHAM ROAD
READING RG6 1JG
Telephone: Reading (0734) 61492

data base
MICRO COMPUTER AND BUSINESS SYSTEMS SPECIALISTS
101 Cricklewood Broadway,
LONDON NW2 3JG
Tel: 01-450 1388/9
Telex: 299479

**FOR PROFESSIONAL ADVICE
on tailor made programs
from the PET experts**

phone

imPETus
Computer Systems

Freepost, Hendon,
London NW4 1YB

on
01-202 2726 or 01-202 9630

**MASS
MICROS**
WELLSON HOUSE, BROWNFIELDS
WELWYN GARDEN CITY HERTS AL7 1AR
07073-31436

cytek
COMPUTER
APPLICATIONS
PET specialists, Commodore appointed
Commercial systems dealers
9 Warwick Road, Manchester 16
Tel: 061-872 4682

For £25 you can have an ad this size.

Our rate is £6.25 per single column centimetre but the
column width is 1/2 page wide.

Compare that with the rest! Any size taken but cash with
order to -

*Printout Advertisement Office, North Warnborough,
Basingstoke, Hants RG25 1PB*

ATARI 
**HOME &
BUSINESS COMPUTERS
IN
LEICESTER**

We carry in stock:

Models 400 & 800, Disk Drives,
printers, Thorn & Atari programs and
most software

**We'll equal that price & better the
service**

MAYS VIDEO &
COMPUTERS

57 Churchgate, Leicester
0533-22212

E.L. Mills,
1 Vanessa Way,
Bexley, Kent DA5 2JS

Specialist in designing and implementing systems based on 32K PET with CompuThink drives (400 or 800K).

Chris Preston Software Consultant

Specialist in assembly language
and CompuThink disks
All types of work undertaken

104 Tresham Road, Great Barr,
Birmingham B44 Tel: 021-360 0981

VIC - 20 3.5K

- 1) Hi-Resolution Graphics 176x96
 - 2) Machine Code Loader
- Both programs on one tape for basic

VIC only
£5.00 inclusive

Holderness Computer Services
Patrinton, Hull HU12 0NA

Obtain a FREE quotation

from

NIMROD SOFTWARE

4 Stanley Road, London S.W.14
01 - 878 6498

15 Super Games including
**DRIVER, SIMON, BREAKOUT,
MAZE, HANGMAN, MASTER-
MIND, LANDER, ATOM BOMB**
All games £3 or under. Send for free
detailed catalogue to: BYTESOFT,
10 Glendale Close, Kirkella,
North Humberside HU10 7XB

ATARI 16K (400 and 800)
Four amazing games - "Kopikat, Maze,
Snakes, Hangman", all of which de-
monstrate ATARI's mind blowing colour
and sound capabilities. Any two (guar-
anteed to load) on cassette plus instructions
£7.50 post paid to:
J. Whittaker, Veg Software,
"Bromley Barn", Cranbrook Road
Staplehurst, Kent

MEMORY EXPANSION PACKS

FOR

at unbeatable prices!

SINCLAIR ZX81

16K £30.00

VIC 20

3K £21.30

8K (Expandable to 16K) £66.00

Please add £1.00 for P&P, Plus VAT

NAMAL Electronics

No.1, Claygate Road, Cambridge CB1 4JZ
Tel: 0223 248257 Telex 817445

PET UPGRADE

We can upgrade your large keyboard PET at a
fraction of the "New Price" difference.

8K to 16K.....£44.00

16K to 32K.....from £56.00

8K to 32K.....£69.00

No extra charge if expansion area drilled with
quarter inch holes.

All new RAMs fitted with sockets
Fast while-U-wait service, normally within
2 hours

Tel: Mick Bignell 01-953 8385

ZX 81 EDUCATIONAL

Teacher approved cassettes £4.95 each

16K GEOGRAPHY Find towns in U.K. or Europe with a series of five maps
drawn on the screen. Plus Town and Country naming program
and English Towns Hangman.

16K MATHS Four function maths plus adding in hours and minutes. Excit-
ing graphics used. Includes some competitive programs for
two children to use together.

S.A.E. for full range of cassettes

BUSINESS CASSETTE

16K STOCKBOOK Produced by experienced business user. Stockbook keeps
full record of up to 400 stock lines including quantity, cost and
retail prices, shows stock value, prints stock list to make stock
taking easy. Prints stock tickets. Deduct sales and show day's
takings and percentage mark-up. Find stock lines by entering
even part of the item's name. Easy to use. Also Breakeven - a
program to plan required turnover for shops, and Vatman,
easily add, deduct or change VAT rates. To take full advantage
of these programs a Sinclair Printer should be used. £9.95

From A. Parsons, Dept MCP, 23 Coxhill Gardens, River, Dover, Kent

PROGRAMMERS

To advertise in one of these 4cm x 6cm
programmers boxes costs only £16.00
per insertion.

Contact Jonathan Horne on 025671 2724

ZX81 GAMES 4K

Top quality fast action machine code
**SCRAMBLE, GALAXY INVADERS, GUNFIGHT,
SPACE INVADERS, ASTEROIDS**
Many satisfied customers

£3.95 per program on tape
from: J.M. Steadman, 6 Carron Close,
Leighton Buzzard, Beds., LU7 7XB

PROGRAMMING THE PET/CBM by RAY WEST

The new book on BASIC and machine-code for all
PET/CBMs. Includes explanations and examples of all
BASIC keywords and 6502 opcodes; tape, disk, and
printer handling, and very much more.

504 pages, with comprehensive contents list,
appendices, and index. Paperback, 19 cm x 26 cm.

Only £14.90 (includes post & packing) from
LEVEL LIMITED (P)

P.O. Box 438, Hampstead, London NW3 1BH

MAKE TAX FREE MONEY WITH YOUR MICRO

Details:- Lambert & Co
Pwllheli LL53 6RR Tel: (0758) 2925

Old tricks for new Pets...

COMMAND-O is a FOUR KILOBYTE Rom for the 4000/8000 Basic 4 Pets with all the "Toolkit" commands RENUMBER (improved), AUTO, DUMP, DELETE, FIND (improved), HELP, TRACE (improved & includes STEP), and OFF - plus PRINT USING - plus four extra disk commands INITIALIZE, MERGE, EXECUTE, and SEND - plus extra editing commands SCROLL, MOVE, OUT, BEEP, and KILL - plus SET user-definable soft key, 190 characters on key. Ask for Model CO-80N for the 8032 or CO-40N for the 4016/4032. £50.00 plus Vat

New tricks for old Pets...

DISK-O-PRO is a FOUR KILOBYTE Rom that upgrades 2000/3000 Pets, but lets you keep all your old software - including Toolkit. As well as REPEAT KEYS and PRINT USING, you get all the Basic 4 disk commands CONCAT, DOPEN, DCLOSE, RECORD, HEADER, COLLECT, BACKUP, COPY, APPEND, DSAVE, DLOAD, CATALOG, RENAME, SCRATCH and DIRECTORY - plus extra disk commands INITIALIZE, MERGE, EXECUTE and SEND - plus extra editing commands SCROLL, MOVE, OUT, BEEP and KILL - plus SET user definable soft-key, 80 characters - plus program scroll-up and scroll-down. We recommend the 4040 disk or upgraded 3040 for full benefit of disk commands. Ask for Model DOP-16N for new Pets 2001-3032, and 2001-8 with retrofit Roms & TK160P Toolkit. £50.00 plus Vat, other models available.

PRONTO-PET hard/soft reset switch for the 3000/4000 Pets. We don't think you'll "crash" your Pet using our software, but if you do the Pronto-Pet will get you out! Also clears the Pet for the next job, without that nasty off/on power surge. £9.99 + Vat

and no tricks missed!

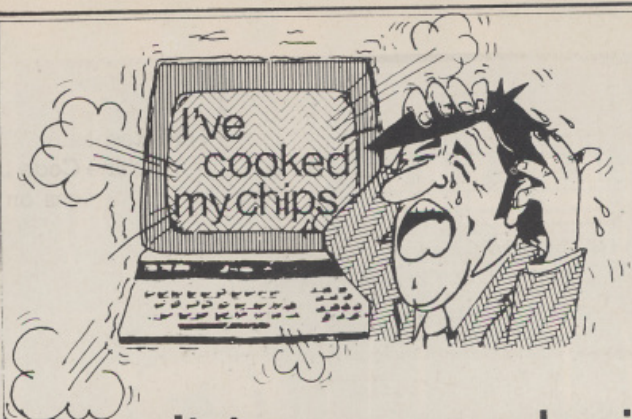
KRAM Keyed Random Access Method. Kid your Pet it's an IBM! VSAM disk handling for 3032/4032/8032 Pets with 3040/4040/8050 disks means you retrieve your data FAST, by NAME - no tracks, sectors or blocks to worry about. Over 2,500 users worldwide have joined the "Klub"! Now you can too, at the 1981 price, £75.00 plus Vat.

SPACEMAKER All our Rom products are compatible with each other, but should you want, say, Wordpro with Kram, or Disk-o-pro with Visicalc, then SPACEMAKER will allow both Roms to address one Rom socket, with just the flip of a switch, for £22.50 plus Vat.

We are sole UK distributors for all these fine products. If your CBM dealer is out of stock, they are available by mail from us, by cheque/Access/Barclaycard (UK post paid) or send for details.

Calco Software

Lakeside House Kingston Hill Surrey KT27QT Tel 01-546-7256



Don't tear your hair Compufix is there! Swindon 694066

If your P.E.T. is having a nervous breakdown or your APPLE has bitten it's last byte. Then you need us!!

We are offering fast repairs to faulty systems, 24 & 48 hour maintenance contracts are also available.

COMPUFIX

VIC PET APPLE SOFTWARE

NEW GRAPHICS - full screen super graphics package for the VIC. Adds 18 commands to BASIC. Draw detailed pictures using 152 X 160 points. Hires & Multicolor graphic modes on same screen! Switch between text and graphics screens with function keys. Save/load pictures to/from tape or disk. Requires 3K or 8K expander. With sample programs and user's manual. Price \$25; manual only \$5.

VIC/PET VIGIL - Interactive Games Language - Program your own or play the 9 games included. With 60+ powerful commands. Easy to learn. VIC version has color (requires 3K or 8K expander). Complete with user's manual. Price \$35; manual only \$10.

VIC/PET PIPER - the MUSIC MACHINE - Simplest way yet to compose, conduct and play music. Complete music control of notes, rests, volume, repeats, tempo, etc. Written in fast machine language. With sample compositions and user's manual. Price \$25; manual only \$5.

VIC HIRES/MULTICOLOR GRAPHICS UTILITIES - Add graphics to VIC BASIC. Requires no extra memory. Plot points, lines and boxes in fine detail - 104 X 152 points. With sample programs and user's manual. Price \$15; manual only \$3.

PET TINY Pascal PLUS+ - structured language alternative to BASIC. With Editor, Compiler and Interpreter. All programming constructs supported. With user's manual. Graphics or non-graphics versions. For NEW/4.0/8032. W/graphics (32K) - disk \$50; cassette \$55. W/O graphics (16K) - disk \$35; cassette \$40; manual only \$10.

NEW APPLE II DYNASOFT Pascal - complete Pascal development system with Editor, Compiler, Interpreter and Supervisor. All programming constructs and data types: scalars, char, array, pointer, integer, hires, lores and machine language interface. With sample programs and user's manual. Disk \$50; Disk with complete machine readable source code \$85; manual only \$10.

PET TINY BASIC COMPILER - Produces true 6502 code. Supports all floating point operations. Subset of the full PET BASIC. Compiler listing optional with 16K version (included). With user's manual. For OLD/NEW/4.0/8032 and 8K+. Price \$25; manual only \$5.

PET MACHINE LANGUAGE GUIDE - Now in its ninth printing. Learn the hidden talents of your Old, New or 4.0 Rom PET/CBM. 30+ routines fully detailed. Price \$9 (\$11 foreign).

NEW ABACUS - Beautifully crafted Chinese abacus. Teach children basics of math or use as lovely decoration. With free 50+ page manual explaining use. Price \$14.95 + \$2.00 postage (\$4.00 foreign).

ABACUS SOFTWARE
P. O. Box 7211
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49510
616 / 241-5510

Unless noted, prices are for cassette. Add \$3.00 per disk package. Foreign orders add \$5.00 per package or \$2.00 for manual only. All orders must be prepaid in US Dollars. VISA, MC, ACCESS, Eurocard.



The best price/performance ratio you've ever seen on a personal computer

	ACT Sirius 1	Typical Personal Computers
MEMORY	128K - 1024K	32K - 64K
DISK CAPACITY	1.2 Mb - 10 Mb	140K - 1Mb
PROCESSOR	16 bit	8 bit
OPERATING SYSTEMS	CP/M, M-86 & MSDOS	CP/M or Machine Specific
LANGUAGES	Microsoft BASIC, BASIC compiler, COBOL, PASCAL, FORTRAN	Microsoft BASIC perhaps one or two others eg PASCAL
Price	£2,395	£1,700 - £3,000

16-bit APL Ltd.,
Maple House,
Mortlake Crescent,
Chester CH3 5UR
Tel: 0244-21064

Please send details of the amazing Sirius 1 -

Name _____ Position _____ Company _____ Address _____ Tel. No. _____

INSIDE TRADER

I see that Commodore's UK Commandant, butch, Range-Rover driving Big Bob Gleadow, is making steady progress with his fiendish plan to gain control of the rest of the organisation. The company's international arm (C.E.L.) has just been removed, kicking and screaming from its luxurious Swiss headquarters to Leigh Road, Slough. Commodore UK recently vacated said offices on the grounds that they were unfit for human habitation.

Apple high command have emerged from their bunker after an extraordinary three day autopsy on the Apple III. The inquest verdict was 'premature introduction'. The new Apple IV, code-named LISA will therefore be introduced S-L-O-W-L-Y. This may be just as well as the Chief Engineer on the LISA project has defected to an outfit called Grid.

I predict an entertainingly acrimonious barney between Personal Software Inc., now pompously renamed VisiCorp, and their UK distributors, ACT Microsoft. Both companies are secretly plotting to get out of the contract; VisiCorp so it can take over the juicy European market itself; ACT to concentrate on more profitable IBM/Sirius and CP/M software. My friends in the legal profession are looking forward to some profitable litigation.

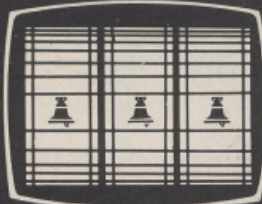
Floppy disk manufacturers should be quaking in their boots as word gets out of Bart Khan and his amazing cube. Mr Khan, who is chairman of a company called MicroXeno, says the six-inch cube will store at least 9.9 gigabytes (that's 9,900 million bytes) of data. For some reason no-one seems prepared to lend Mr Khan the money to manufacture the ineffable cube. MicroXeno recently advertised itself as "rapidly becoming the world's largest network of consultants...in computer technology." The company had five employees at the time.

Latest manufacturer to receive the sincerest form of flattery is Apple: some Taiwanese rotter is busy churning out counterfeit Apple IIs by the dozen. The only immediate way of telling the Chinese copy from the real McWozniak is to look for the 'Made in USA tag'. If it ain't there you've got yourself a Chang Kai Chek special.

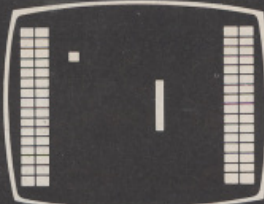
'Colonel' Bruce Page's economic theories were a legend even at the New Statesman, whence he recently departed the Editorship, not entirely of his own volition. Now the Colonel is tinkering with a computer model of the economy running on his £69 Sinclair ZX81. Seeing as how the Treasury's model of the economy keeps a multi-million pound Univac mainframe busy, I am not optimistic about the Colonel's chances.

People Who Live in Glass Houses dept: My congratulations to Mr R. Sangster on his appointment as Tandy's Official Complainer-in-Chief and Literary Critic Extraordinaire. First to suffer Mr Sangster's wrath were ACT, who received a letter threatening dire retribution if a long list of complaints about the Sirius 1 brochure was not immediately rectified. The effect of this was somewhat dissipated by the non-enclosure of the list. I earnestly entreat those with a grudge against Tandy not to inundate Mr Sangster with erroneous excerpts from TRS-80 literature. His address is Tandy Corporation, Tame Way Tower, Bridge Street, Walsall WS7 7LA.

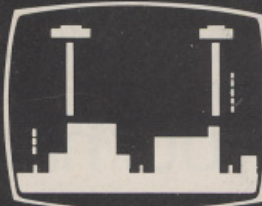
Stop Press: Latest to receive one of Mr Sangster's mournful missives is none other than our Editor. I understand Mr Sangster is anxious to receive the sort of chain letters that bring all manner of disaster upon those unwise enough to break the chain.



1. FRUIT MACHINE:



2. BRICKDOWN:



3. BLOCKADE:



4. ROULETTE:



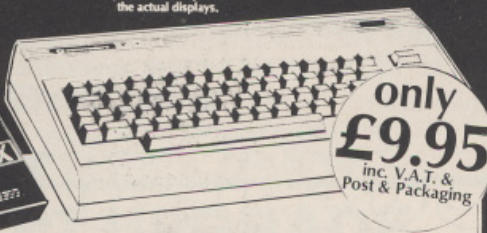
5. HANGMAN:



6. TARKUS:

The above are artists impressions only and do not represent the actual displays.

NEW!



only
£9.95
inc. V.A.T. &
Post & Packaging

BEELINES VIC 6SX VOL 1

The Games System in a Cassette!

At last! A really professionally produced piece of games software that will guarantee you hours of fascinating thrills on your VIC computer. The first volume of the 'Beelines VIC 6' gives you exciting colour, arcade quality games that make full use of the power and display quality of the VIC.

The 'VIC 6' is attractively priced so that no VIC user need be without it, and it is available exclusively from Beelines. Just send £9.95.

So fill in the coupon, or phone us with your credit card number, and the 'VIC 6' will be yours within days!



BEELINES (Bolton) LTD

FREEPOST (No stamp required) Bolton BL3 6YZ
Ansaphone (0204) 385299

Reg. office: 124 Newport St., Bolton BL3 6AB. Dealer enquiries welcome.

Please send me:

Qty.	Item	Price
	Beelines 'VIC 6' Vol. 1 at £9.95	

I enclose cheque/P.O. ☐

OR Please debit my:

Access **5224**

Barclaycard **4929**

Expiry Date

Name

Address

Code

Tel. (day)

Official orders welcome - we will ship to approved account holders on receipt of firm order.

Delivery free within mainland UK.

Access and Barclaycard welcome.

Telephone answering machine for 24hr/7 day

credit card orders **0204 385299**

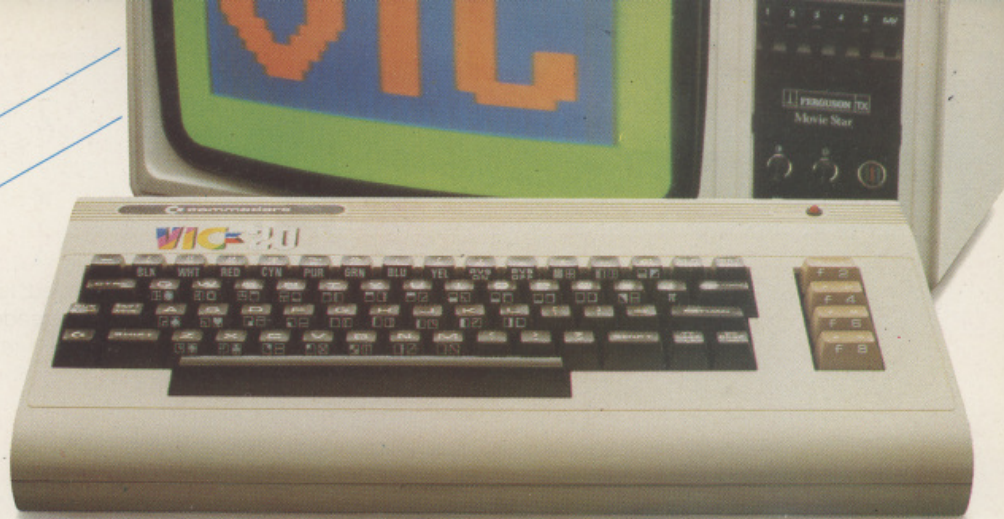
Freeport: **Beelines, FREEPOST,**

Bolton BL3 6YZ



MP/5/82

SEE VIC AT THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMODORE COMPUTER SHOW,
CUNARD HOTEL, HAMMERSMITH,
3rd-5th JUNE.
3rd June 12 noon-6pm. 4th June 10am-6pm.
5th June 10am-5pm.



"Give me one good reason why I should choose a VIC 20 home computer."

1. VIC is outstanding value for money. No other colour home computer can give so much for under £200.

2. Total standard memory 25K made up of 20K ROM and 5K RAM.

3. Fully expandable to 27½K user RAM.

4. Microsoft Basic interpreter as standard.

5. Accessible machine language via plug-in cartridges.

6. Connects direct to monitor or standard television.

7. Full size typewriter style keyboard.

8. Full colour and sound.

9. All colours easily accessible.

10. 62 predefined graphic characters direct from the keyboard.

11. Full set of upper and lower case characters.

12. 256 displayable characters direct from the keyboard.

13. High resolution graphics capability via plug-in cartridges.

14. Programmable function keys can be used with plug-in cartridges.

15. Automatic repeat on cursor function keys.

16. User-definable input/output port.

17. Machine bus port for memory expansion and ROM software.

18. Standard interfaces for hardware peripherals.

19. VIC 20 is truly expandable into a highly sophisticated computer system with a comprehensive list of accessories (see panel below).

20. Full range of software for home, education, business and entertainment on disk, cassette and cartridge.

21. Books, manuals and learning aids from Teach Yourself Basic to the VIC programmers' reference guide (a must for advanced programmers).

22. Full support for VIC owners – their own magazine 'VIC Computing' as well as a national network of VIC user groups.

23. National dealer network providing full service and support to VIC owners.

24. Expertise and experience – Commodore are world leaders in microcomputer and silicon chip technology.

25. Commodore is the leading supplier of micro computers in the UK to business, schools, industry and the home.

26. VIC 20 is the best-selling colour home computer in the UK.

How many reasons was it you wanted?

Accessories include:

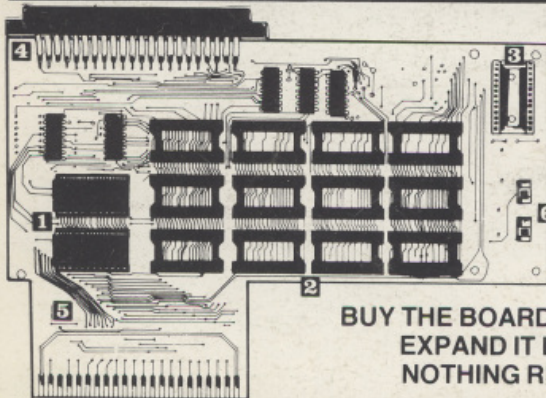
- Cassette tape unit.
- Single drive 5¼" floppy disk unit (170 K bytes capacity).
- 80-column dot matrix printer.
- 3K, 8K and 16K RAM expansion cartridges.
- Programming aid packs; machine code monitor cartridge; programmers' aid cartridge; high resolution graphics cartridge.

- Plug-in conversion box for a full 32K, 40-column x 24 lines VIC including Prestel compatibility.
- RS 232C communication cartridge.
- Memory expansion board.
- IEEE488 interface cartridge.
- Joysticks, light pens, paddles and motor controllers.

commodore
VIC 20
The best home computer in the world.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE VIC 20, TELEPHONE OR WRITE TO: COMMODORE INFORMATION CENTRE, 675 AJAX AVENUE, SLOUGH, BERKSHIRE. TELEPHONE SLOUGH 79292.

THIS SHOULD BE THE ONLY MEMORY BOARD YOU WILL EVER NEED FOR YOUR VIC!



Features of the board include:

- 1 3K Memory hi-resolution area
- 2 24K Expansion area, just plug in the chips to expand memory!
- 3 Socket for VicKit or other roms
- 4 Memory port reproduced
- 5 High quality gold plated edge, plated thro' hole, glass fibre board
- 6 Switch to isolate 3K memory area

(Board shown with covers removed)

**BUY THE BOARD WITH THE MEMORY YOU NEED NOW!
EXPAND IT LATER! ADD VICKIT OR VICKIT II
NOTHING REDUNDANT! NOTHING WASTED**

**£49
+VAT**

*Expandable board fully socketed with 3K RAM fitted.

NO NEED FOR A MOTHERBOARD OR EXPANSION CHASSIS



VICKIT

offers **HELP** to programmers

it also offers AUTO, DELETE, DUMP, FIND, HELP, OFF, RENUMBER, STEP, TRACE
Example:-

RUN

```
?DIVISION BY ZERO ERROR IN 500
READY.
HELP
500 J = SQR(A*B/C)
```

READY

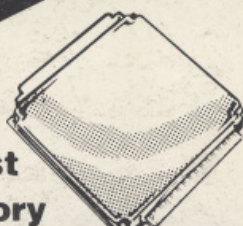
HELP How many times have you wanted to scream "HELP!" when your VIC couldn't interpret your program and all it would say was **?SYNTAX ERROR?** Fret no longer: Now just type in **HELP** The line on which the error occurs will be shown and the erroneous portion of the line will be indicated in reverse video on the screen. Truly a great help in any learning or school situation.

NOW AVAILABLE

**VIC-
Low cost
3k Memory**

**Lowest Cost!
Compact Size!
Gives 6½k user Ram!
Allows high resolution graphics to be programmed!
Complete user instructions included!**

£25.99



**VIC-
Light Pen**

This high quality light pen works in both normal and Hi-Res modes on the Vic allowing simple interaction with the Vic without keyboard entry. Easy to program and easy to use. e.g. Menu selection, Non-keyboard entry, Teaching, Games.
Feature: Touch sensitive "Enter" contacts to eliminate accidental entry.

£25.00

VICKIT II

£29

At last, Hi-resolution Graphics Made Easy
In addition to all the features of VICKIT, VICKIT II has.....

NEW

TEXT-
GRAPHICS-
LINE-
CLEAR-
DRAW-
PUT-
FILL-
SET-
POINT-

swap between the hi-resolution mode and normal text mode
(TEXT automatically set on ERROR) for drawing lines and boxes (filled or unfilled)
to clear the graphics screen-
to draw lines (more than 1 at a time)
save and restore the contents of a rectangular area on the hi-res screen into and from an array
fills an area on the screen
sets a point on the hi-res screen
tests whether a point is set on the hi-res screen

VICKIT or VICKIT II plugs into ROM Switchboard or Stack Memory Expansion Board

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY PRICE Only £64.00

Fully socketed board (with cover)

plus 3K hi-res area memory plus VICKIT

plus £1.50 p&p or £5.00 Securicor
(Prices and p&p subject to VAT)

PRICES:-

BOARD with 3K	£49.00
BOARD with 8K	£69.00
BOARD with 8K plus 3K	£85.00
BOARD with 16K	£99.00
BOARD with 16K plus 3K	£115.00
BOARD with 24K	£129.00
BOARD with 24K plus 3K	£145.00

SPECIAL
Add £15 plus VAT for VICKIT
if ordered with any memory
(Usually £25 plus VAT if supplied separately)

Additional Memory

8K (4 chips) **£39.00** 3K (2 chips) **£20.00**

Stack Computer Services Limited

290-298 Derby Road, Bootle, Liverpool 20
Telephone: 051-933 5511
Telex: 627026 (STACK G)

Please add £1.50 p&p or £5.00 Securicor plus VAT
Prices exclude VAT
Please make cheques payable to Stack Computer Services Ltd

24hr answerphone service.
Please ring us day or night on
051 933 5511



ASK YOUR LOCAL COMMODORE VIC DEALER FOR DETAILS OF STACKS VIC PERIPHERALS