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COMPUTER

EVERY THURSDAY

NEWS

50p DEC 1-7, 1983 Vol 1 No 39 **THE COMPLETE COMPUTING WEEKLY**

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WEEKLY**

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an old
flame?



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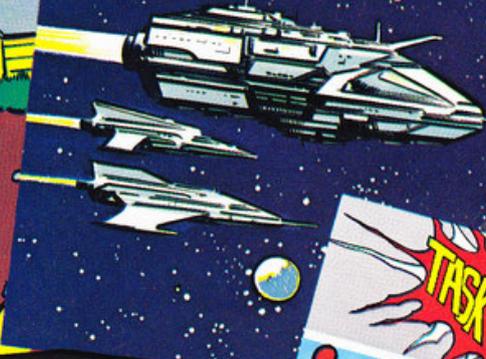
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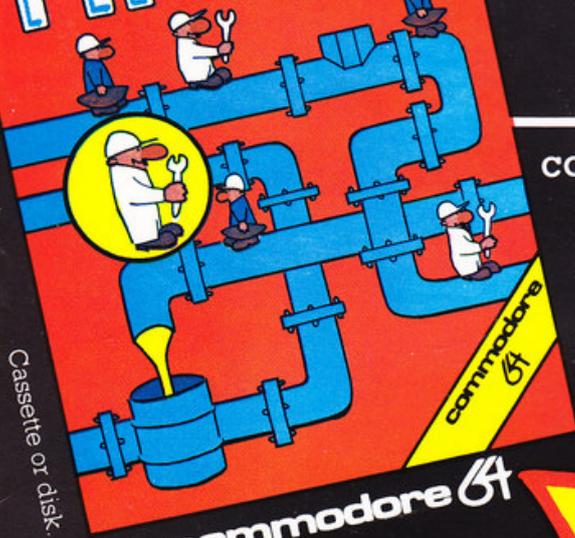


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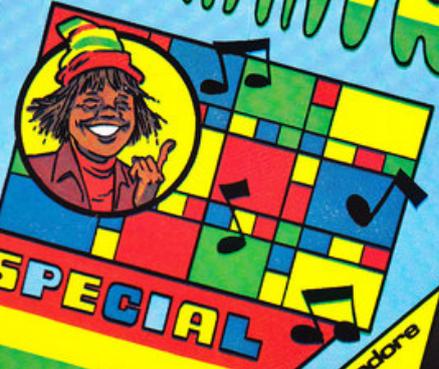
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48K ORIC-1
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Commodore 64

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Disk Cass



Pull-out and keep
Micropaedia
Christmas Buyer's Guide
 PCN's handy reference to the best of the micros in the shops.

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Cover photo by John Price Stuios

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British Micro Awards 1984

Your chance to vote for the best in microcomputing. Plus a chance to win an Oric and software. Full details on page 32.

"BRITISH MICROCOMPUTING AWARDS 1984"

Wild West Shootout
 Ten Stack light rifles — plus games — are the prizes in this fun competition. Take your best shot on page 89.

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The Dragon 64 — big brother of the 32 — is with us now. Mike Gerrard puts it through the hoop.

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Osborne plans

Osborne UK expects to be going it alone next year and plans a flying start.

If it separates from its troubled US parent company, the UK arm aims to rehabilitate the Osborne portable micro with a package of selling points and services. These will include a price cut, refinements to its existing services, and changes in its direct marketing. It also expects to sub-contract out the manufacturing and carry out more local hardware and software development.

'With the recent downturn in demand, we have had ample opportunity to review our operations,' said Mike Healey, Osborne UK

managing director. One result of this review is the feeling that the Osborne 1 is overpriced, despite the amount of free software that comes with the system. Its pricing will be 'revised' in the new year.

Mr Healey also spoke of a number of new services and refinements to its existing customer services. Osborne users should be able to buy a wider range of products directly from the company next year, particularly software and add-ons.

Bruce Durie of the Osborne User Group said he was 'absolutely satisfied' that Osborne UK would be able to meet the needs of users. 'The company is now able to make

use of us as a support group,' he said, emphasising the close links between the supplier and its users.

There are thought to be about 7,000 Osborne users in the country, and Mr Durie will try to assemble as many of them as possible at a meeting at the Open University, Milton Keynes, on January 14. He asks any Osborne user interested in attending to contact him at, 18 Crendon St., High Wycombe, Bucks.

The purpose of the meeting will be to re-assure users that Osborne isn't going to disappear from the UK, and to look for ways to use the experience of both the supplier and the users.

Apple takes software out of Lisa price

Apple UK has followed its US parent company in taking software out of the Lisa's price. The Lisa now costs £5,500.

The software, of course, is an essential part of Lisa's operation, but Apple says that with more third party software becoming available for Lisa it makes sense to offer customers the option.

You can't actually do much with Lisa on its own but you still have a base for either third party software, or for your own customised system. And the machine's specification is still impressive.

Business Systems International sells the Busifile database system, while the financial modelling package Modeller comes from Intelligence UK and Sunaccount, a Cobol business accounting package, is sold by Systems Union.

Logica will soon launch a Xenix package, while the mathematically based language APL6800 is also in the pipeline.

You'll still get the O/S Lisadesk with your unbundled Lisa, and Lisadraw, Lisaproject, Lisaalc, Lisagraph, Lisawrite and Lisalist will be available together at f

Dear Sir,

Enclosed find the press release for our new ROM based software for the BBC Micro aptly named Beebfont.

The ROM has 6 standard scripts, 5 in upper & lower case and 1 in upper case only. The facility for 2 user-defined character sets has also been provided.

TWO-FACED — It's amazing what you can do with a humble dot-matrix printer these days. Watford Electronics (0923 40588) is now selling a ROM-based program to make your letters and other documents more attractive. Beebfont gives you six new typefaces and allows you to define two of your own character sets. To sell for £45, Beebfont will be in competition with the disk-based Fancy Font (Issue 36). Fancy Font offers different sizes of font, more sets and costs £161.

Micro printer family grows with another Brother

Spring should see the launch of the Brother EP-44, a much improved version of the Brother EP-22 portable typewriter/printer (Issue 35).

The EP-44 still has a built-in RS232 interface, but has a much larger memory than the EP-22's 2,000 characters, has much better quality print with true descenders, and is send and receive, so you can use it as a terminal or even as an extension keyboard for your micro.

On top of this the editing facilities have been enhanced, and it will be possible to mix calculations and text. The Brother's brother costs around £230, and, large companies being what they are, is about to be joined by another brother.

This is the HR5, which is a printer only. It will cost £170, and will print

at around 30cps. Its main feature is that it is very small, around half the size of an Epson, and emulates the MX80. So if you can get your micro running with an Epson, you should have no trouble with this one. It uses the thermal paper or thermally printed carbon ribbon system used by the EP-44. This system was adequate on the EP-22, but was much clearer on the pre-production models PCN saw.

Brother itself is now on the brink of a major commitment to the UK micro printer market, and will be giving interfacing support to customers. The company regards itself as having about a year's start on its nearest rivals, and should be producing a number of new products over the next year.

Torch first with Z80 card

Torch Computers has pushed Acorn into second place by bringing out a Z80 card for the BBC micro.

Torch already builds a Z80 into its disk pack but it announced last week that it had made a card for the BBC including the Z80 processor, 64K of RAM, its MCP operating system offering CP/M compatibility, and the Perfect suite of software.

The unit will cost £375.

The prices of Acorn's controver-

sial second processors for the BBC are not expected to be as high as PCN reported last week. An official Acorn spokesman said that pricing on the 6502 and Z80 add-ons has yet to be decided, but he added that they were likely to cost a little under half what PCN had been told by an Acorn representative at Compec — this would put them below £175 and £400 respectively.

In quantities of 100 Z80 chips cost about £6 each.

Acorn net cast

In a move that could herald the end of Econet, Acorn has revealed that it is working on a new networking system based on the Cambridge Ring.

As the result of collaboration between Acorn and Cambridge University's Computer Laboratory, the company hopes to offer a £50 CMOS chip that will allow BBC Bs and other micros to interface with a second generation of the highly rated ring network.

Apart from its low cost compared to other networking systems like Ethernet, the improved ring offers a high data transfer rate. A Cambridge Ring using fibre optic cable could operate at 100Mbps per second and carry video signals in addition to data and voice signals.

Hermann Hauser, an Acorn director, has said that the Cambridge Ring will replace Econet as the standard networking system for the BBC. Existing users will be able to upgrade to the new system when it becomes available at the end of next year. In practice it wouldn't be so much an upgrade as a replacement.

Econet uses twin twisted pairs of wires in a bus configuration with a collision detection protocol. It is, therefore, completely incompatible with the Cambridge Ring which uses a single twisted pair of wires (or in the fastest version, optical fibre cable) in a ring configuration with

an 'empty slot' protocol.

Its main drawback is that it may have missed the boat if it is to become an industry standard. IEEE, the American standards institute, has opted for Ethernet, which is similar in concept to Econet but operates at speeds approaching that of the Cambridge Ring. Meanwhile IBM has announced a network of its own using a token passing protocol (a station can only transmit if it is in possession of a token that is passed to each station in turn).

The other drawback could be cost. If Acorn keeps costs down to the £50 per station it has quoted it will certainly make it attractive. But other manufacturers are likely to wait and see if Acorn can deliver the goods before committing themselves to buying Cambridge Ring chips.

Torch Computers, for example, which sells its own upgraded version of Econet, called Torchnet, will not say if it will switch to the ring.

'The first Cambridge Ring is certainly excellent,' said Ray Anderson, Torch's software director, 'and, in principle, we are interested in the technology. But we would want to know more about what Acorn's product can do together with firm prices and delivery dates before we started to give it active consideration.'

Old ROM back in some BBCs

By John Lettice

If you're buying a BBC Model B this Christmas, you may be in for a surprise. The Model B is selling so well that Acorn is facing a chip shortage, and as a result is using stocks of its 1981 Basic ROM chip in some machines.

It's difficult to tell what your chances of buying a BBC with the old chip are, because the percentage will vary depending on the availability of the new ones. An Acorn spokesman told PCN that the numbers involved were very small.

But from the customer's point of view you have no comeback on Acorn if you do find you've bought a machine with the 1981 chip. Although most Model Bs are now

produced with the 1982 Basic ROM, the specifications Acorn quotes are for the 1981, so this is the only chip Acorn is legally obliged to use.

Most customers will still get the enhanced chip, but a few will not. So if you're about to buy a BBC B, either get a guarantee that your dealer will exchange it if necessary, or check it before buying it. Hit the Break key and type REPORT, and it will either tell you Copyright 1981 or 1982.

But what if you've already bought a 1981 one? Will you be able to switch the chip later? Acorn says that it is working out a suitable policy for replacement of the old chips. Watch for developments in future issues.

Promises are no substitute for presents

For sale, or not for sale?

In the pre-Christmas bonanza of advertised new releases you would be well advised to phone suppliers to find out if what you want is, in fact, ready for sending on.

We've found several suppliers advertising programs which are not ready for release. Reasons given include: 'We had tape-duplicating problems, the new batch is coming

in tomorrow'; 'The software's ready, we're just waiting for the cassette covers to come back from the printer'; 'We're out of stock at the moment'; (the advertisement had been out only 3 days).

While these reasons may be true, it seems suppliers are advertising products which are not ready for delivery. Not that you would guess this from advertisements. Most of the products were displayed alongside well-known and available programs.

So, before you part with your Postal Order or cheque, take time to find out whether you can expect the package in a few weeks, or several months . . .

A-T calls in spreadsheet

Ashton-Tate, maker of software such as dBase II has withdrawn its Financial Planner spreadsheet.

A spokesman for A-T said that promised enhancements had not

come through early enough and the company had therefore decided to pull the package in and to spend time on improving it. Financial Planner will be relaunched in 1984. The spokesman would not give a firm date, nor detail the 'substantial' improvements to be made, which are thought to concern recalculations, a weak feature.

Artless Hobbit

BBC Micro users can now get their hands on Melbourne House's best-seller The Hobbit, but they have to do without the program's graphics.

The BBC's 32K is enough room for text handling and other necessary routines, but the extra 16K in which the graphics routines reside on the Spectrum and Oric systems isn't there.

The Hobbit has been consistently popular since its launch in November last year and many people still number it among the best adventure games on the scene. Whether it will catch on without graphics remains to be seen. The BBC version costs £14.95 and comes with a copy of Tolkien's book and a 16-page instruction booklet.

Dragon deal

Dragon 32 users will not be offered an upgrade to the Dragon 64. Instead the company is looking at a trade-in deal.

'We are putting the wheels in motion at the moment to set that up,' said Dragon Data's Richard Wadman. 'The net cost to the user of moving to a 64 in this way could be about £85', he added.

Dragon will be putting plenty of resources behind the 64 in the new year and it is also looking at MSDOS to complement OS-9 on its business system. Mr Wadman said that the Dragon 32 would probably fade into the background, as far as sales are concerned, in the middle of next year but he added, 'That doesn't mean that we will be strangling it on January 1.'

He scoffed at suggestions that Dragon Data had considered pulling out of the home computer business in the wake of the financial problems that came to a head in September (Issue 27). 'We intend to expand our range,' he said.

Two early new year disk drives for Oric

The long awaited Oric drives will be available in January — twice.

First off the starting blocks will be Byte Drive 500, which will be available in early January for the Oric, BBC B and Apple. Stocks of these are being built up by manufacturer ITL Kathmill, (0634) 815464.

Next in line will be Oric's own drives, which an Oric spokeswoman claims will be launched at the Northern Computer Fair on January 17.

The official Oric drives are said to be in production, but the spokeswoman could not give PCN information about numbers being produced. ITL, on the other hand, says it has been holding back on the launch of Byte Drive 500 until stocks were large enough to satisfy shops.

The ITL product's specifications are impressive. The basic unit consists of a small black single-disk box, using 3in. Hitachi disks with a formatted capacity of 220K per side, and a claimed typical access time of 3 milliseconds. The idea is that all micros use the same unit, plus a separate power supply that fits into a matching case. A connecting 'hybrid cable' has the machine-specific interface built in. For a complete single disk system for the Oric you'd pay £299, including VAT.

ITL says the disk system doesn't interfere with the micro's internal memory, so you should have no problems running existing programs. The Oric version is compatible with the redesigned Oric ROM,



Byte Drive — beating Oric to the punch.

and if you have the old ROM it includes a number of enhancements that tackle some difficulties you may have encountered.

It's planned to get the system available for other micros soon, and a Spectrum version is scheduled for April or May. An upgrade to 5.25 in. disks is also scheduled, and ITL wants to beef up the capacity of the system while holding the price, at least for a year.

But why start with Oric? ITL tells us that 'disk drives were promised for several other micros, Oric didn't have them, and we aimed at where we saw the need.' Design of the system started in July, just before Oric started referring to its 'coming soon' drives.

Meanwhile, the Spectrum — no

relation — chain of computer shops is selling a disk system for the ZX Spectrum for £245. It's made by Interactive Instruments, and is currently exclusive to the Spectrum chain. It works for the 16K or 48K, and uses 100K single-sided double-density 5.25 in. disks.

The sudden explosion of drives for low-cost micros looks like starting a new war in the market. If more manufacturers using the new 3 in. and 3.5 in. disks come into the market, cheap storage should take several giant steps, and you could be throwing away your tape recorder by next Christmas.

But another pioneer of home micro disk systems, the French company Cyborg, does not expect to ship before January.

VIEW FROM JAPAN



Santa-san and a micro Christmas

By Serge Powell

'Tis but a short time to Christmas and all across Japan young kiddies are dreaming of ROM and RAM, and their joysticks are tucked carefully beneath the futons in the hope that old Santa-san will soon be there.

Or are they?

For a Shinto-Buddhist country it seems that Japan has certainly managed to get into the swing if not the spirit of Christmas. Here we are, as I write this, not yet out of November, and last night the television news covered a parade of Santa Clauses in some remote part of Japan. Even without that I've already become so used to seeing Santa Clauses in the store windows that if the hordes of Japanese salary men that board my commuter train each morning suddenly did so bedecked in red suits and sporting white beards in place of their three-piece suits I might not notice the difference.

The retailers certainly seem to be gearing up for business in what would appear to be the normal Christmas fashion. The stores are bulging with electronic gew-gaws including many new computer models and a lot of new games, especially since the advent (if that is the right word in this context) of MSX Basic.

But gearing up for business in the normal Christmas fashion begs a number of questions in a non-Christian society. Actually, the average Japanese family's idea of Christmas is for poppa-san to travel home on Christmas Eve with what is known as a Christmas cake, but instead of being filled with nuts, fruit and loose change it is little more than a birthday cake decorated with Merry Christmas icing rather than Happy Birthday.

The standard Christmas gift-giving is pretty much confined to inconsequential like woollen jumpers (apologies to sheep shearers everywhere). So why are the retailers getting ready for Christmas so assiduously?

The Japanese have a quaint custom called the Bonus Season. Unlike most seasons, it comes twice a year—in December and June—and it is more a form of deferred salary than a real bonus in most cases. Depending on how well the union has negotiated the deal, it can amount to between 1½ and four times your monthly salary in a lump sum.

No wonder the shopkeepers and store managers are rubbing their hands in anticipation of heavy sales, especially of high ticket items like personal computers with all the trimmings, video recorders and cameras, cars, and foreign holidays, and no wonder they are so quick to take advantage of that old western custom personified by Santa Claus.

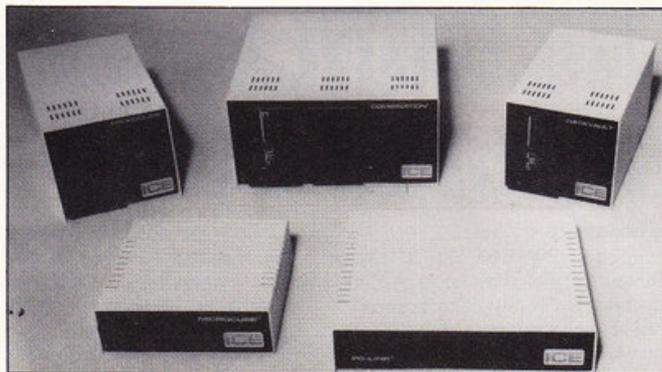
He is ready-made for them. Having spent June and July racking their brains for eye-catching promotions and come-ons to separate the recipients from their summer bonuses, what could be better come December than an idea that their brethren abroad have had almost 2,000 years to fine tune.

And so Santa Claus becomes the excuse the retailers give to individuals (and surprisingly not so much to families, which presumably have to consider things like mortgages) so that they can purchase the thing they would probably be buying anyway.

But this is hardly the season to be cynical. When all is said and done, we all know that it's better to give than to receive, and if retailers can give Shinto-Buddhists an excuse for getting into computers there may be something to be said for the Christmas ideal of peace on earth and goodwill to men the way it works in Japan.

But it's still a fascinating mixture of the sacred and the profane; the spirit of Christmas and the world of wage bargaining. In Japan, of course, it might be argued that the spirit of Christmas is not so much sacred as irrelevant, but in the world of commerce nothing is irrelevant that can be turned to profit.

With the unions and the bosses sitting around a table and agreeing that a rather substantial amount of income should be handed over at this time of year, and with the consumer actually getting to it before the tax-man, there should be plenty of goodwill flying around; why shouldn't the computer industry and the retailers catch a piece of it?



Microcubes from the Ice box range — megabytes to cut your teeth on.

Ice has launched a range of Winchester disk drives and associated back-up devices. Amongst them is the Microcube which Ice claims utilises the latest developments in hard disk technology.

The Microcubes are 3.5in drives and are available in capacities of 5 and 10Mb. They will interface with the Apple II, IBM PC, Sirius/Victor and Epson QX10.

Mass storage in the Ice age

Ice provides the interface card, installation and operating manual, full support software, not to mention one year's on-site maintenance as standard.

Contact Ice (07842-47271)

A New Year's revolution?

Business micro users can look forward to better products and better service next year.

David Broad, managing director of UK micro maker Comart, told a recent meeting organised by the Computer Retailers Association (CRA) that 1984 would sort out some micro suppliers and see others improving their standards.

'Nineteen eighty-four will certainly see the exit of many of the camp followers,' he said. But other micro makers and 'professional' dealers will add to the functions and services they can offer users, he predicted.

'I think that all micro manufacturers will become more applications-oriented,' Mr Broad said. He suggested that software endorsement schemes would become much more common than they have been. On the system software front he forecast that utilities would in-

creasingly be built into the machine and included in the sale price, with much improved documentation.

'A 12-month warranty will be the order of the day,' he said, adding that fast repair and return times backed up in the first place by improved reliability from the manufacturers would give users an easier ride in the coming year.

His speech to the CRA meeting also gave a hint of a reduction in the price of UK-produced micros. The duty barriers that discriminate against imported components in contrast to imported systems are coming down, he said.

Without sticking his neck out on the subject of technology, Mr Broad predicted closer co-operation between suppliers of both hardware and software particularly in the area of networking. 'Clients are going to insist on compatibility,' he said.

Transform your Spectrum with a real keyboard

A Beckenham company looks set to beat Fuller to the punch with a full-size keyboard for the ZX Spectrum.

Transform (658-6350) says that it is currently manufacturing the keyboard and it expects to be able to demonstrate it at the ZX Micro Fair in London at the weekend. By mid-December it should be in full production.

The keyboard unit will take the Spectrum with or without an Interface 1 attached. Its features include

a space bar, numeric pad, separate exponentiation mode and decimal point key.

Transform will be offering The Telesound beeper with the unit to transfer sound to your TV speaker.

With a gentle dig a Fuller, whose FDS has been pictured in advertisements and spoken of in awed tones for several months, Transform has declared that it will not be advertising the keyboard until it is confident that it will be able to meet. The unit will cost £99.99.

VisiOn arrives . . .

VisiCorp's Lisa-like operating environment, VisiOn, is finally available for delivery, following its announcement earlier this year. But users may be disappointed when they investigate the prices and discover the drawbacks.

Like Microsoft's MSDOS enhancement, VisiOn aims to give a more friendly interface by using multiple windows on the screen and a desktop mouse to select options and move text and data.

VisiOn also allows you to run several tasks concurrently and switch easily from one application to another.

The VisiOn screen looks similar to Apple's expensive Lisa system with the notable omission of the icons (small pictures of everyday objects that represent computer functions).

VisiCorp describes the screen display as a desktop metaphor; it has tried to create an electronic analogy of what happens on the average desk.

Using VisiOn, a collection of files can be taken from the filing drawer and spread on the desk. A file can be opened and worked on, and information moved between files, using the mouse to select commands.

For the inexperienced user, there

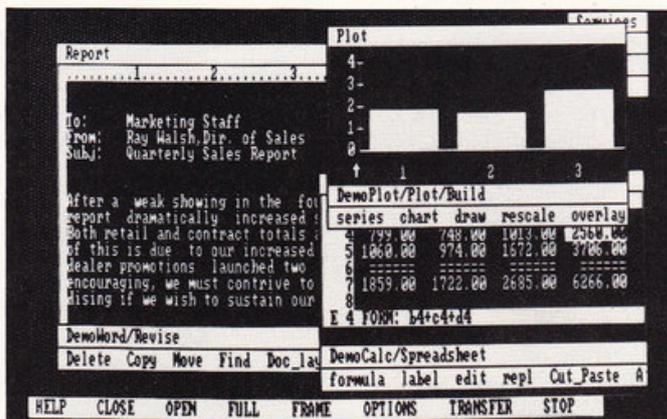
are two levels of 'help' information. Placing the screen pointer on a command generates a one-line comment describing what the command does. For more detailed information the 'HELP' command brings a 'help' window on screen. According to VisiCorp, VisiOn keeps track of what you are doing and anticipates what help you may want.

Unlike Microsoft's enhanced MSDOS, VisiOn is not an operating system, but sits on top of the OS providing a consistent interface between the user and the applications program. And, unlike the Microsoft offering, it will cost extra.

These differences could be crucial. If you use, say, an MSDOS system, your favourite programs will run under the enhanced MSDOS even if they don't take advantage of the mouse and multiple windows. With VisiOn, the same programs would have to be re-written.

Since there will be far fewer people using VisiOn rather than MSDOS, it seems likely that fewer software companies will customise their programs to work with VisiOn.

At the moment only a spreadsheet, a graphics package and a word processor will work under



VisiOn windows — 3D depth but no icons.

VisiOn, all written by VisiCorp. A database manager is promised for next spring.

The only other programs in the pipeline are communications packages being developed jointly with other software companies, which will add micro-mainframe links and networking.

The costs of VisiOn could be another disincentive. The Applications Manager costs £375 (plus VAT), to which must be added the cost of the applications packages and the mouse.

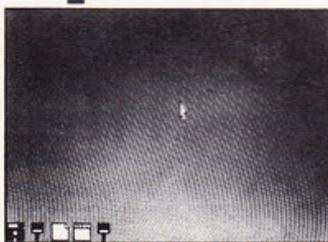
For a user wanting VisiOn Calc

and VisiOn Graph the cost will be £935 (plus VAT). With VisiOn Word the price rises to £1,170 (plus VAT).

Dealers at the UK launch were less than impressed with VisiOn. As one put it: 'VisiCorp is built around the success of one product, Visicalc, and that has had its day. I sell 40 Lotus 1-2-3 packages for every copy of Visicalc.'

'All that VisiOn seems to offer is a more user-friendly competitor for 1-2-3 but without the database. At £1,200 a throw it is hardly good value for money.'

And Microsoft opens windows



MS-Windows' opening screen — a mouse-controlled cursor and icons.

Windows on micros are about to become one of the biggest promotional drives since the double-glazing boom. The reason? Microsoft Windows is going to be standard equipment on the micros of 23 manufacturers.

MS-Windows was launched in the US two weeks ago (Monitor, Issue 38) and made its first appearance in the UK last week. In the interval it has found further support from hardware and software suppliers, and a roll of companies that will support the product reads like a Who's Who of microcomputing.

IBM's name isn't on the roll but that doesn't deter Microsoft from hailing MS-Windows as an oppor-

tunity to create 'a standard user interface and development environment'. In other words, what you do with a micro and the way you do it is about to become more consistent across a range of different machines.

MS-Windows is an extension to MSDOS 2.0 and on the machines of 23 suppliers it will be part of the package. Microsoft UK's general manager David Fraser expects it to make little or no difference to the cost of the system.

To use it you need 192K of RAM, twin floppies, a bit-mapped display and a mouse. The system lets you select a job from a row of icons, split the screen to accommodate windows featuring several applications, and initiate procedures without touching the keyboard.

For the sake of speed, MS-Windows loads all the selected applications into RAM when it is booted. Data can be transferred between applications, but the system may have restrictions when running jobs requiring a great deal of memory. Microsoft is looking into forms of swapping.

MS-Windows features passive and intelligent windows; a block of text, for example, may be realigned when the window in which it appears is moved to another area of the screen, while a simple display may be clipped as its window shrinks. It also allows over-printing part of a window with a relevant 'help' box.

In alphabetical order, MS-Windows' 23 supporters are: Altos, Apple/Rana, Burroughs, Bytec, Columbia, Compaq, Computer Devices, Convergent Technologies, Data General, DEC, Eagle, Hewlett-Packard, Honeywell, ITT, Mindset, NCR, Polo Microsystems, Seequa, Tandy, Televideo, Texas Instruments, Wang and Zenith.

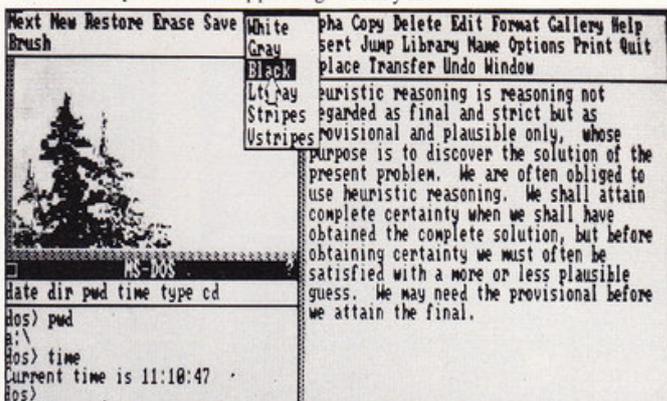
Software producers supporting

the system are Ashton-Tate, Context MBA, Lotus, Peachtree, Software Arts and Software Publishing, and ACT and Micro Focus seem likely to join them.

The first systems with MS-Windows are due out in the US on April 30.

Each manufacturer implements the package, usually by adding two device drivers — an interface to handle the keyboard and mouse input, and another for the screen output.

It may be that Microsoft needs the support of IBM to stand a real chance of establishing a standard with MS-Windows. Mr Fraser pointed out that IBM doesn't usually follow suit. It will not pronounce on windows until it is ready to.



In action — three applications and a graphics menu sharing one screen.

ITT extras

The multinational ITT Corporation is set to take on IBM with a product that undercuts the PC by about five per cent.

ITT's machine, called the Xtra, will be launched at next week's Comdex show in Las Vegas and will be on sale in the US from April.

ITT has based the machine around the 8088 processor and is promising IBM compatibility. It will be offered in two versions.

The \$3,000 model has 128K of RAM, twin floppies and monochrome monitor.

The more expensive version is intended to compete with the IBM hard disk XT machine (hence the Xtra label on ITT's offering). It will have a 10Mb hard disk.

Apart from the lower cost, ITT is pinning its hopes on the extras it has built into its machine, including communications facilities to link into ITT services such as electronic mail. There is also a tilt and swivel mechanism on its monitors and a redesigned keyboard.

ITT says the machine will incorporate the window extension to the MSDOS operating system (report, page 5).

Unlike IBM, ITT is not an established computer manufacturer. Its main involvement in computing has been as a maker of terminals and printers and its previous foray into the personal computer field was through a deal with Apple which allowed the company to assemble Apple IIs and sell them as the ITT 2020. But this was not an outstanding success.

Co-incidentally, IBM has announced the PC XT/370 desktop system in the UK some five weeks after its appearance in the US. The XT/370 looks identical to the PC's hard disk cousin, the XT, but it interfaces to IBM's VM mainframe operating environment and gives a wider range of functions to users. With 10Mb of hard disk it will cost £8,228 plus VAT, and you will also have to fork out £919 for the software.



IBM ON THE LINE — ACT has adapted its electronic mail package Micromail to support the IBM PC, opening the service up to many new users. The package lets subscribers send and receive messages, link to Telecom Gold, and send telexes. It costs £109 for which you get access to an electronic mailbox for a year, communications software, and documentation. ACT, distributor of the Sirius and manufacturer of the Apricot, is on 0272 211733.

Keeping time with a PC

Unspectacular though it may look this modest little device is unusual. It is called Pixtik and is a real-time clock that fits externally to the IBM PC. You plug it into the parallel printer port and slot the printer into it. It has a power supply good for two years and costs £57.70 from Pixel-Plus, 0530 62565.



SOFTWARE

Games

Atari: English Software (061-835 1358) has expanded its Atari range with games for the 400, 800, 600XL and 800XL, costing £9.95 each. The titles include Batty Builders, Airstrike 2, and Caverunner. And Allrian (0753 45201), a newcomer to the Atari field, is publishing a series in 16K for the full range of micros. Supplied on cassette, at £7.50 each, they are Intruder Alert, Rings of the Empire, Space Trap, Giant Slalom, and Crazy-tack.

Colour Genie: The Ipswich Software Factory has released three games for Lowe's Colour Genie, each costing £8. A-10 Bomber is a Scramble-type game, Geniepede pits you against spiders and scorpions, and Martian Rescue involves picking up a ship-wrecked crew while avoiding Martian attackers and asteroid storms.

Commodore: An interesting idea

from Audiogenic caters for both Vic 20 and Commodore 64 users. Its new cassettes store different versions of the same game on either side. Two in this series are currently available: Cataclysm and Bonzo. Cataclysm is shoot-em-up style and costs £5.95; Bonzo, for £7.95 has ladders, levels, and boxes. Broderbund, the US software producer distributed in the UK by Softsel (01-844 2040) has adapted its Spare Change cartoon game for the Commodore 64. There are already for the Apple and Atari. In this game you own a Spare Change Arcade and have to stop pilfering by two Zerkos. Marketing Micro Software, closer to home in Ipswich (0473 462721), has a US import for the 64 called Zeppelin Rescue, costing £19.95 on disk or £17.95 on tape. Another from the same company, Conqueror, is for the Vic 20. This has a medieval setting and costs £15.95.



Zeppelin Rescue and Conqueror among others from Marketing Micro Software.

Business

Sanyo: A book-keeping system with the promising name of Prophet has been launched for Sanyo micros by Logitek (0257 426644). It includes sales, nominal and purchase ledgers, invoicing, stock control, payroll, and a report generator. The full package costs £750 plus VAT.

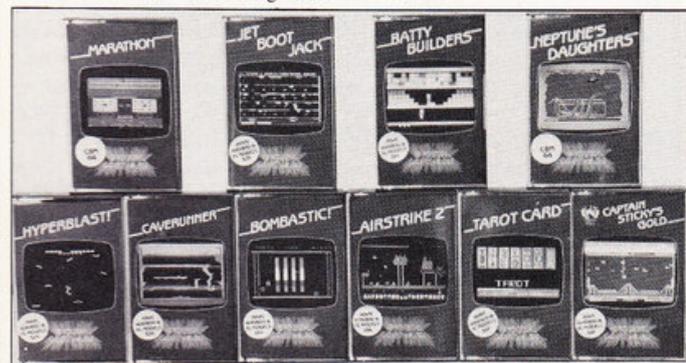
Sirius: Croydon systems company Encotel (01-686 9687) has added a built-in calculator to the newly-released version of Spell-binder for the Sirius. At £320, it includes assembler files of video and printer drivers, editing characters, microprograms and documentation. Paperless offices are also the aim of Micro Nationwide (0293 511482) with its Memo 2000 package. Running at 1200 bps, this lets a Sirius user hook into Telecom Gold, other Sirius systems, or com-

patible computers. Versions for the IBM PC, Apricot, and NCR Decision Mate V are planned.

Commodore: Also from Broderbund (see under Games) comes Bank Street Writer, a word processor for the Commodore 64. In the US it costs \$69.95.

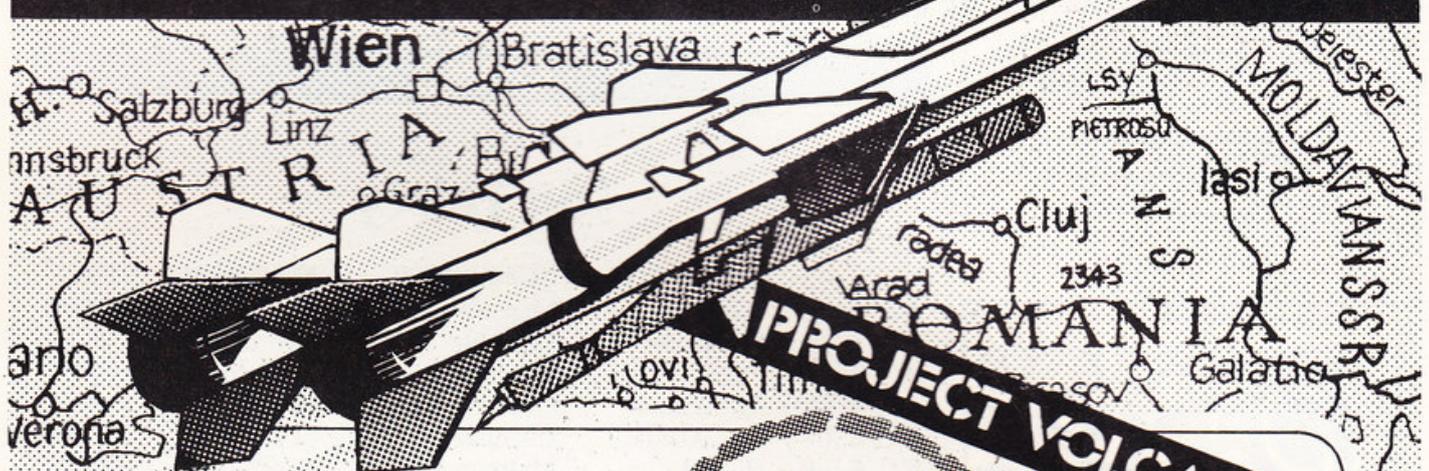
IBM PC: ACS of London (01-883 7302) has been appointed by Micro Marketing International and IMSI of the US to distribute their products in the UK, bringing over programs for the IBM PC. Four-Point Graphics costs £132; Bisybase, to schedule your day, costs £183; Job Costing is £183; and Investment Manager, compatible with Lotus 1-2-3, costs £199.

CP/M, MSDOS: Corporate Modelling Consultants has unveiled Unifor, a £950 statistical forecasting package for business systems. It provides the tools to develop models from which forecasts can be made.



English Software's range for the Atari systems old and new.

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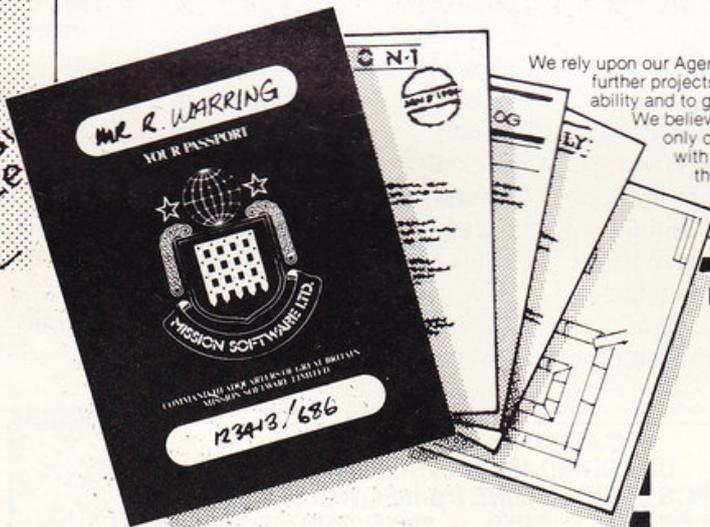
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7. ZIP ZAP	IMAGINE	£4.49
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2. SCRAMBLE	ANIROG	£6.99
3. ATTACK OF MUTANT CAMELS	LLAMASOFT	£6.50
4. GRID RUNNER	LLAMASOFT	£6.50
5. HOOVER BOWER	LLAMASOFT	£6.50

VIC 20		OUR PRICE
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PCN Charts

This top 30 games list is compiled from both independent and multiple sources across the nation. It reflects what's happening in high streets in the two weeks up to November 10 and, like the micro charts, does not take account of mail order sales. The micro charts this week show the number of machines sold in the same two-week period so they tell the story in the high street between November 11 and November 25.

GAMES

Top Thirty

	GAME TITLE	PUBLISHER	MACHINE	PRICE	
▲ 1 (5)	Valhalla	Legend	Spectrum	£14.90	
▼ 2 (1)	Lunar Jet Man	Ultimate	Spectrum	£5.50	
▶ 3 (3)	Flight	Psion	Spectrum*	£5.95	
▲ 4 (12)	Ant Attack	Quicksilva	Spectrum	£6.95	
▲ 5 (—)	Atic Attack	Ultimate	Spectrum	£5.50	
▼ 6 (4)	Hobbit	Melbourne	Spectrum*	£14.95	
▼ 7 (2)	Manic Miner	BugByte	Spectrum	£5.95	
▲ 8 (9)	JetPac	Ultimate	Spectrum*	£5.50	
▲ 9 (22)	Splat!	Incentive	Spectrum	£5.50	
▶ 10 (10)	Gridrunner	Llamasoft	Vic 20*	£6.00	
▼ 11 (6)	Hovver Bovver	Llamasoft	C64	£7.50	
▲ 12 (—)	Arcadia	Imagine	V20*	£5.50	
▲ 13 (15)	Horace and the Spiders	Psion/Melbourne	Spectrum*	£5.95	
▶ 14 (14)	Chukkie egg	A&F	Spectrum	£6.90	
▼ 15 (8)	Kong	Ocean	Spectrum	£5.90	
▲ 16 (—)	Computer War	Thorn	V20*	£29.99	
▲ 17 (23)	Harrier Attack	Martech/Durell	Oric	£6.95	
▼ 18 (7)	Zoom	Imagine	Spectrum	£5.50	
▲ 19 (29)	Bugaboo	Quicksilva	Spectrum	£6.95	
▲ 20 (28)	Corridors of Genon	New Generation	Spectrum	£5.95	
▶ 21 (21)	Purple Turtles	Quicksilva	C64	£7.95	
▼ 22 (13)	H.A.T.C.	Hewson	Spectrum	£7.95	
▲ 23 (—)	Hungry Horace	Psion/Melbourne	Spectrum*	£5.95	
▼ 24 (18)	Scrabble	Psion	Spectrum	£15.95	
▲ 25 (—)	Sheer Panic	Visions	Spectrum	£5.95	
▲ 26 (—)	Skyhawk	Quicksilva	Vic 20	£7.95	
▼ 27 (19)	3D Deep Space	Postern	Atari*	£8.00	
▲ 28 (—)	Pyramid	Fantasy	Spectrum	£5.50	
▲ 29 (—)	Hunter Killer	Protek	Spectrum	£7.05	
▲ 30 (—)	Metagalactic	Llama	Llamasoft	Vic 20	£6.00

*Denotes available on other machines

CARTOON ANIMATION ON 16K AND 48K SPECTRUM WITH THE GRAPHICS SUBROUGINE from FOWLER SOFTWARE

The program enables someone with no knowledge of machine code to animate his drawings. Small and large objects can be moved smoothly, ie one pixel at a time.

In order to show what is possible using this program, demonstration program includes a 9 x 3 characters figure walking across the screen.

The Graphics Subrougine is in machine code. The user writes his own Basic program, loads on the Graphics Subrougine and accesses this from the Basic program.

A booklet explains in detail that to move a drawing you need to tell the Graphics Subrougine where the drawing is in the memory, where an instruction sequence is, where you want the drawing to start on the screen, the length and height of the drawing, and the speed of movement. All this is done using Basic commands. The Graphics Subrougine occupies less than 760 bytes.

It moves a drawing by altering the area of memory containing the screen display. You do not even need to

draw any pictures; you could just move whatever is already on the screen eg. text. The drawings that are moved are one colour (ink and paper). You can also use the Graphics Subrougine to draw and colour a stationary drawing. The time taken to draw and colour a picture which fills the entire screen is a 1/10 second.

A 3 x 3 characters drawing involves typing in 81 numbers and uses up 81 bytes.

Please send me copies of the
Graphics Subrougine and instructions at £10 each
Cheque/P.O. to Fowler Software, Hendon Mill, Nelson, Lancs.
Mr/Mrs/Miss.....
Address.....

PCN Charts

Neither mail order nor deposit-only orders are included in these listings. The prices quoted are for the no-frills models and include VAT. Information for the top-selling micros is culled from retailers and dealers throughout the country and, like the games, is updated every alternate week.

PCN Charts are compiled exclusively for us by MRIB (Computers), London, (01) 408 0250.

HARDWARE

Top Twenty up to £1,000

MODEL	PRICE	DISTRIBUTOR
▲ 1 (3) CBM 64	£220	(CO)
▼ 2 (1) Spectrum	£99	(SI)
▼ 3 (2) BBC B	£399	(AC)
▶ 4 (4) Vic 20	£140	(CO)
▲ 5 (6) Oric 1	£99	(OR)
▲ 6 (7) Dragon 32	£170	(DD)
▲ 7 (8) TI/994a	£90	(TI)
▼ 8 (5) ZX/81	£45	(SI)
▶ 9 (9) Atari 800	£300	(AT)
▲ 10 (11) Apple 11e	£750	(AP)
▲ 11 (15) Sharp MZ700	£240	(SH)
▲ 12 (13) Lynx 48/96	£225	(CA)
▲ 13 (16) Tandy Colour	£180	(TA)
▲ 14 (19) Colour Genie	£168	(LO)
▼ 15 (12) Sharp MZ80A	£349	(SH)
▲ 16 (18) CGLM 5	£150	(SO)
▼ 17 (10) Atari 400	£150	(AT)
▲ 18 (—) Newbrain A	£268	(GR)
▼ 19 (14) Aquarius	£70	(MA)
▼ 20 (17) Electron	£199	(AC)

Top Ten over £1,000

▶ 1 (1) ACT Sirius	£2,525	(ACT)
▶ 2 (2) IBM PC	£2,392	(IBM)
▲ 3 (4) Apple III	£2,780	(AP)
▲ 4 (5) Commodore 8000 series	£1,200	(CO)
▼ 5 (3) HP86A	£1,570	(HP)
▲ 6 (9) Apricot	£1,719	(ACT)
▲ 7 (—) Kaypro	£1,949	(CKC)
▼ 8 (6) Epson QX10	£1,995	(EP)
▼ 9 (8) DEC Rainbow	£2,714	(DEC)
▲ 10 (—) Televideo TS-800 series	£1,495	(MD)

AC Acorn Computers. ACT — ACT. AP — Apple Computer. AT — Atari International. BM — British Micro. CA — Computers. CO — Commodore. DEC — Digital. DR — Dragon Data. EP — Epson. HP — Hewlett Packard. IBM — IBM. LO — Lowe Electronics. LL — Lucas Logic. MA — Mattel. OL — Olivetti. OR — Oric. SH — Sharp. SI — Sinclair. SO — Sord. TA — Tandy. TI — Texas Instruments.



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The program commands are used and entered just like normal Basic keywords, the program operates by trapping your usual keyboard input and testing for any of the ten additional commands.

The extra commands available are:

- AUTO auto line number, start and interval definable.
- CLOCK ON/OFF 12 hour clock, displayed on screen.
- DELETE Basic line block delete.
- EXAMINE reads tape headers and displays information.
- FIND find specified string in Basic program.
- MEMORY displays memory status.
- RENUMBER full line renumber with GOSUBs and GOTOs.
- SCROLL ON/OFF continuous scrolling.
- TRACE ON/OFF slows program execution, displays line and statement currently executed.
- VARIABLES displays variable names and contents.

48K Spectrum Extended Spectrum — £9.95

Also available at Boots, W.H. Smith and all good computer shops.

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Manic Miner Reincarnate

Any Spectrum owner struggling to get through Manic Miner may be interested to learn how to get more lives. The number of lives you start with is held in 34269, so first MERGE the Basic program and stop the tape. Then enter "25 POKE 34269, n" where n is the number of lives you would like. Then RUN this program and start the tape again.

It is recommended that n be no greater than 32 as it can corrupt the screen display and greatly reduce speed.

Brian Sheldon,
Morecambe, Lancs
Some would say, this isn't quite cricket... Ed

Gazing in hope toward Jupiter

I hope that the demise of Jupiter Cantab does not mean the end of the Ace. I think that lack of proper marketing was one reason why Jupiter Cantab did not survive. The Ace is a good machine (but could have been better) and has a well written user manual.

The supposed lack of software for the Ace is no problem to me. I have written a home accounts program, which I hope will be published shortly, and am working on a database with word processing facilities, which I will also put forward for commercial publication. The lack of hardware add-ons, however, is a problem.

A. Kashko
Hayes, Middlesex.

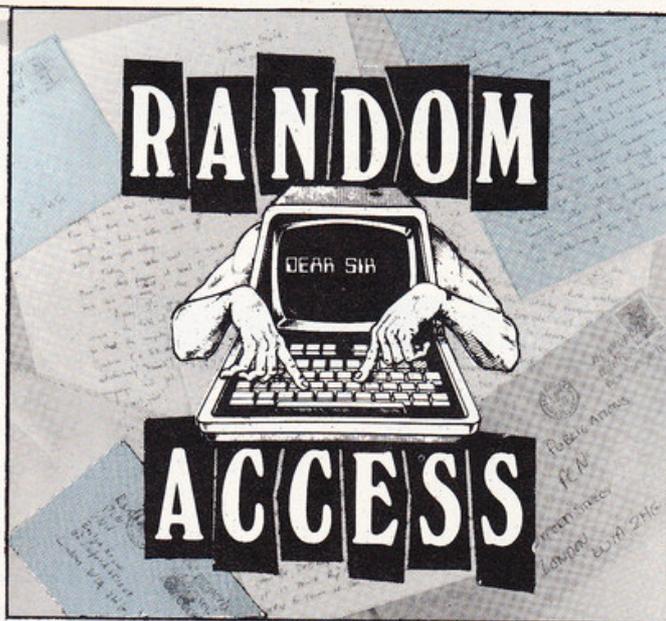
Keeping dealers in order

I think that something has got to be done about readers who advertise goods without having them in stock.

I ordered a disk drive on a return of service basis which was well advertised. Five weeks later this was still not received. And not a word from the supplier. So I sent a cancellation notice with proof of delivery, and I advised Access of my actions, as my account had not been debited up to this point.

However, two weeks later the disk drive arrived (the supplier had not accepted my cancellation).

In the meantime I had purch-



Don't carry a LOAD on your shoulders,
unburden yourself on PCN's letters page.

ased elsewhere, and received my order within three days.

The only problem is that I ended up with two disk drives.

I believe I was justified in cancelling the first order and the supplier should have done the honourable thing and accepted this. Another point is Access should advertise that a credit card cannot be cancelled despite a two-week notice.

G S Dutton,
Harwich, Essex.

Commodore confusion

I have just been browsing over issues of PCN and... I'm staggered... I'm shocked I'm... words fail me.

I have just reread your advertisement for the Personal Computer News Sixty Programs publication for the BBC, Spectrum, Dragon and Oric. Good stuff! But... I quote, 'completely new collection of programs for each of the most popular and fast selling computers' Come, come, now PCN. Have you heard of the Vic 20 and the Commodore 64? According to your own publication the current second and third positions in the charts are respectively held by the Vic 20 and the 64, and at the time of publication the positions were second and fourth. What has Commodore done to you that you should so pointedly ignore its computers when publishing the Sixty Programs books?

The Vic 20 has been one of the most popular and high selling computers for donkeys years. But the above quote

hardly seems fair on the Vic 20 and the 64 and you have misquoted the current 64 recommended price in PCN Charts, which is unforgivable.

While I am having a good moan, would you assure me your Bee game shown at the PCW Show will be listed in ProgramCards for other computers apart from the Beeb, and don't forget the 64 and the Vic 20 this time! Let's face it, we Commodore owners have enough to put up with our user's manuals and can do without PCN ignoring us.

E Covell,
Billericay, Essex.

Ignore you... Heaven forbid! PCN's books of 60 programs for the Vic and 64 are due out next month (and we put the price problem straight too) — Ed.

High-rise idea for exhibitions

Reading the PCN Datelines (which are an ace idea) made me think of an exhibition to which I went.

The show was cramped into one hall of the Bingley Hall, Birmingham, with half the space taken up by a rest area and café. The stands were virtually inaccessible unless you were a sixteen stone giant, with experience of judo, karate and heavyweight boxing. The answer to this problem? Two monitors. If the exhibiting company put a second monitor high-level then people at the back of the crowd could see.

Of course this would not be very suitable for a company

displaying hardware, but my observations showed that 50 people did not (or were not so likely, at any rate) to group around a ZX81 RAM, or some other wonderful piece of hardware.

Marc Clewer,
Bourneville,
Birmingham.

Complaining rhyme of wasted time

On Guy Fawkes' Day I went to see the Brainwave show at NEC. I'd seen it in UK Events, and so the trip (it seemed) made sense.

But all the halls were bleak and bare, no home computers found I there.

(It really wasn't very funny, I'd wasted lots of time and money)

Next time you hear of shows in Birmingham;

before you publish, try confirmingham!

Mike Campbell Jones
Dinas Powys,
S. Glamorgan.

PCN £10 Star Letter



'Tis with regret I must admit
How Datelines sent you on a trip
That wasted time, and money too
And caused concern to more
than a few.

But we did all within our power
To check the facts — the day, the hour

And spread the word in all good faith

That Brainwave was the trip to make.

(And since you complain in novel way

You win star prize and £10 we'll pay!) — Ed

Share your thoughts in the UK's liveliest micro weekly letters columns. Funny, feisty or fanciful, your letter could win you £10 if it's of star status.

WRITETO: Random Access,
Personal Computer News,
VNU, Evelyn House, 62
Oxford Street, London W1A
2HG.

Lost in a maze of bits and bytes, trapped in a forest of errors, bugged by Basic? Whatever the problem, CALL on us. Our panel of experts is at your command.

Write to: Routine Inquiries, *Personal Computer News*, VNU, Evelyn House, 62 Oxford Street, London W1A 2HG.

All about Videotex plus a little hack

Q I hear and read of Prestel and Teletext. What are they? What is the difference between them? How do I go about getting my micro rigged up to use them? How much does it cost to join and for the use of each page?

Also, I've seen War Games— is it possible for a person to link a private computer to an international network and pass all security measures?

Name and address supplied

A Prestel and Teletext are different versions of what is known as Videotex — the technology that hooks the humble domestic television up to remote computers. Videotex comes in two forms: Teletext, which broadcasts the information as part of the television signal; and Viewdata, which uses the telephone network.

Teletext is non-interactive. You can receive the information but you can't send messages back to the remote computer. To receive it, you will need a special adaptor which is usually built in to the television. To use Teletext services, such as Ceefax or Oracle, costs nothing and there are no subscription fees.

At the moment the only micro that can receive and process Teletext information is the BBC B equipped with a Teletext adaptor (£225).

Viewdata is better known by the name of the largest commercial Viewdata service — Prestel. There are others that can be accessed by members of the public as well as private viewdata services run by companies for their own internal purposes. Prestel is run by British Telecom, which sub-lets space on its computers to organisations known as information providers. These maintain their own databases which may be open to any Prestel user or restricted to what is called a closed user group.

From the micro user point of view the two most useful information providers are Micronet 800 and Viewfax 258,

whose pages are packed full of information about micros, latest micro news and software you can download and run on your own machine.

To use Prestel and other viewdata services you will need to buy a modem which converts digital signals into analogue signals for transmission over the telephone system. You will also need the software that allows your micro to talk to the computer on the other end of the telephone line. It is now possible to buy for most makes of micro a hardware/software package of this kind of under £100.

On top of this you will have to pay a quarterly subscription of £5 to gain access to Prestel and a five pence per minute connection charge if you use Prestel during normal office hours (the rest of the time it is free). Most closed user groups on Prestel (like Micronet) charge an annual subscription (in Micronet's case it is £8 a quarter) to gain access to some or all of their pages. In fact, most of Micronet's pages are open to public access and it is only its electronic mail and telesoftware pages that are restricted to members. All of Viewfax's pages are open to public access.

In addition, some pages on Prestel carry a frame charge. This can be as little as 1p per frame or as much as 50p. Most pages on Prestel are free and you will only have to pay to look at or use those pages that carry a service or software. (Even this is not a hard and fast rule).

As for your final point: yes, in theory it is possible to use your micro with a suitable modem to gain access to mainframe computers. Believe it or not an American micro 'hacker' recently appeared in court because he managed to break into a Department of Defense computer.

To be able to do this yourself (which, of course, we do not recommend you trying) you would need to know the telephone number of the computer and the passwords that will allow you to log on.

Snow joking matter, on a 64

Q A couple of months ago I bought a Commodore 64 together with the relevant data cassette recorder.

I am using the 64 with the Texas Instruments colour monitor BGC370. This has a total of eight different channels. Channels 7 and 8 are the ones I'm using.

It has all been a little bit frustrating since on both channels the message Ready For Use lasts only a short period before the screen becomes snowy.

After a couple of minutes the screen is all right again, but when I've typed in a program listing the screen has become snowy again.

Could you please advise me on what is going wrong with this colour monitor. The trouble does not occur when I use my other monitor, a 12in Zenith green screen model.

KH Tjoa, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

A With Christmas on the way this is a topical and picturesque problem, but that won't be much consolation to you as you peer through a blizzard at your coding. How can the snow be thawed?

The answer probably lies in the Commodore 64 rather than in the monitor. The fact that you have no trouble with the monochrome monitor doesn't necessarily indicate that it is a fault in the Texas Instruments unit — but there is also the fact that some users of Commodore 64s in the USA have experienced just the kind of trouble you describe.

You could first check that the TI monitor is blameless by running the 64 with a colour television or two. If the snow continues to fall across the screen you can be reasonably sure that the problems lie in the 64; if, on the other hand, the screen displays are clear you should take the monitor and the problem to your nearest dealer.

You don't say where you bought the 64 or where it was manufactured, but the snow phenomenon has been a problem on some US machines.

The answer, if you can narrow down the source of the problems to the 64, is relatively simple but it isn't one that you'll be able to deal with yourself. The American experience has demonstrated that what is required is a capacitor in the video circuitry of the 64. You should take the system to a Commodore dealer and ask them to make this modification.

Legal thoughts from abroad

Q I bought a BBC Model B this summer, and have found that it is equipped with the 1981 Basic, not the 1982. On top of this, it is faulty. I have found out what the fault is, and have written to the dealer I bought it from, but they don't even answer my letters. What should I do?

Tonio Galea, Paola, Malta

A First the bad news. Acorn says that the vast majority of machines currently being produced include the new chip, but this depends on availability of chips, and therefore it's still possible to buy a Model B with the old chip. The company sees this as a gradual changeover, and as the spex advertised are for the old chip, Acorn is perfectly within its rights to carry on selling it.

There should only be a very few cases of this, but this doesn't really help you. It should be possible to upgrade, as you just need to switch the chips, but your being in Malta might make this expensive. Check with Acorn first.

It should be possible to upgrade, as you just need to switch the chips, but your being in Malta might make this expensive. Check with Acorn first.

As regards your defective micro, your living in Malta should not affect your rights under UK consumer legislation, if you bought from a British company. You should write to the company, recorded delivery if you can, saying that you have been sold defective goods, and that you want your money back.

In the UK you would also say that you intended to take legal action against them for the recovery of your money unless the company replied with a reasonable period — say seven to 14 days — but as you do live in Malta, this may not impress anyone much.

But do write again and try to get some means of proving that the letter was actually delivered. Then you've got to find some way of enforcing your rights in this country. If you have a relative who could do this for you, that would help.

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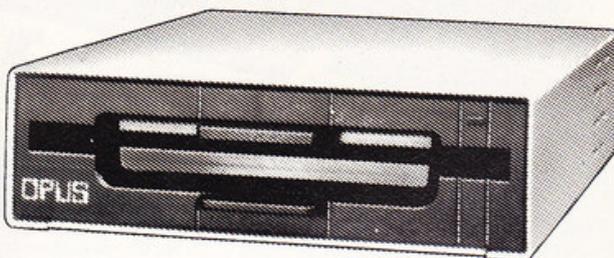
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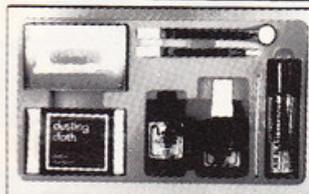
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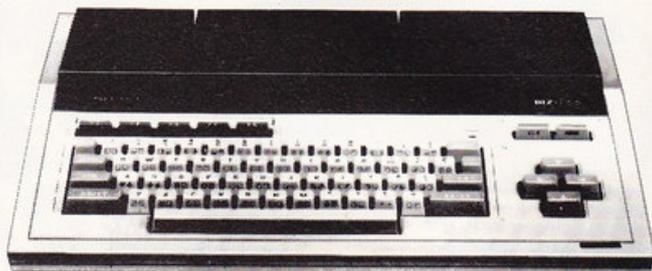
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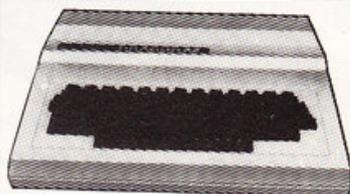
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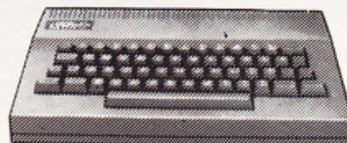
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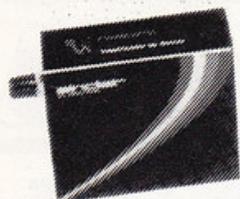
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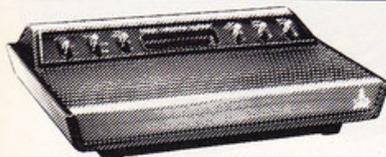
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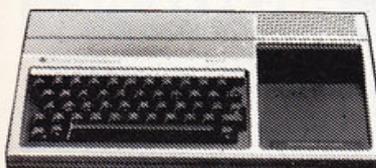


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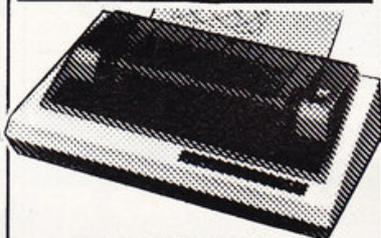
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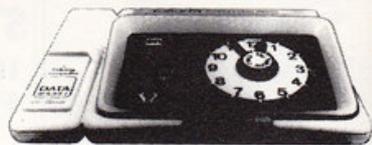
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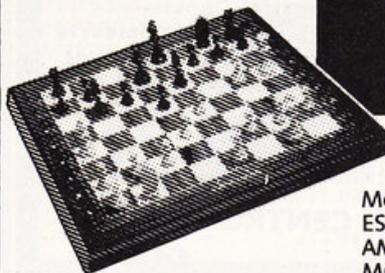
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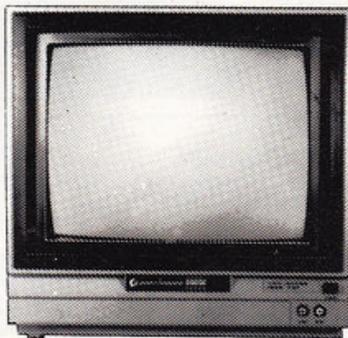
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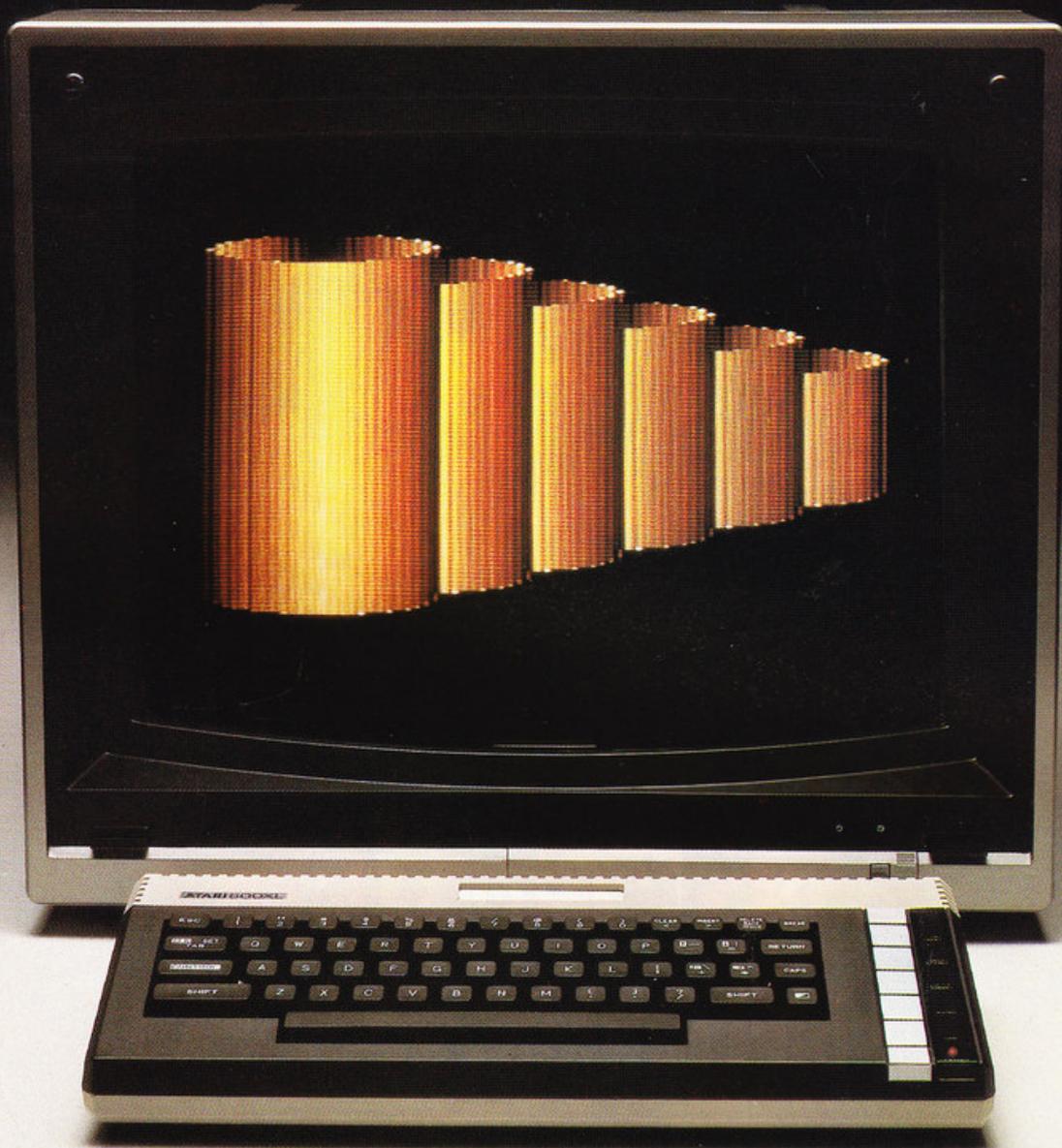
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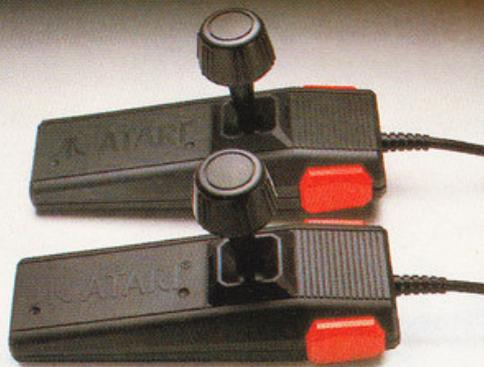
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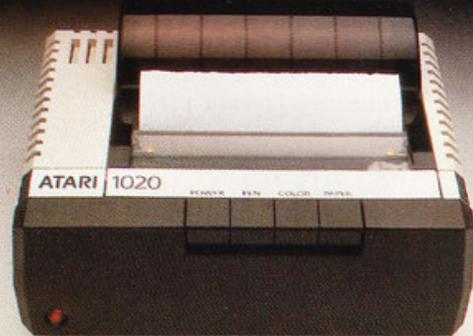
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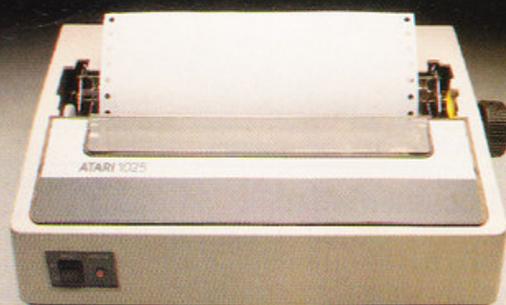
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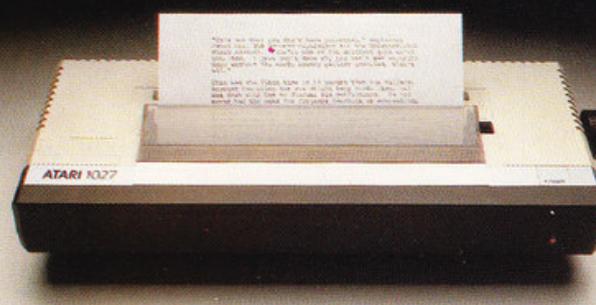
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The new Atari XL home computer system. ATARI®

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The well-known Dragon 32 has acquired a larger sibling — Mike Gerrard checks the difference.

Enter the Dragon 64

When the Dragon 32 roared into life just over a year ago it generated a great deal of interest, not least because it partly reflected the dramatic change in leisure habits that had been taking place in the seventies and eighties. Where, a generation ago, ten-year-olds were playing with model cars and marbles, now they were demanding their own Vics and Spectrums. Toy company Mettoy tried to halt its falling sales by moving into the potentially lucrative home computer market by forming a subsidiary which eventually became Dragon Data.

Its first machine, the Dragon 32, was an instant success and immediately put its name up there alongside the big ones of Sinclair, Commodore, Acorn and Atari. It was ironic, then, that the sales success of the Dragon 32 only created more problems for Mettoy in that it was unable to find funds to back the company's necessary expansion and was obliged to sell a large part of its interest in Dragon Data.

Coinciding with the arrival of Dragon Data's second computer, the Dragon 64, Mettoy went into liquidation, having in the end only a 15.5% shareholding in the Welsh company.

Although the Dragon got a little egg on its face over promised delivery dates of its own disk drive system, which was a few months late, details of its next machine remained under wraps until it was announced towards the end of the summer that a 64K computer would be ready by the end of September. Indeed the machine was ready on time, just, making its debut at the PCW show on September 29, with a promise that the Dragon 64 would be in the shops by the end of November.

One pitfall the company was trying to avoid was that of upward incompatibility, as suffered by ZX users who bought a Spectrum or Vic-20 owners moving up to a Commodore 64. Loyalty was obviously to be catered for, and this has been done by making the new machine work in different modes. One of them is a 32K mode which allows the use of all existing software. This means that inside every Dragon 64 lurks a Dragon 32.

Presentation

Anyone who is colour blind would have to

look extremely closely to distinguish the Dragon 64 from its predecessor, as the casing and keyboard are identical except that the new machine is in a rather more official-looking grey colour, perhaps hinting that it is going to be aimed slightly more at the business market than before.

The usual connecting leads for cassette and TV are provided, along with the exceedingly heavy mains adaptor. This comes with several feet of wire, and its 9-pin plug fits solidly into the socket at the rear of the Dragon.

buyers with, if not a brand new book, at least an error-free one.

The manual does have an eight-page *Dragon 64 Supplement* which explains the differences between the two machines, these being just three items: the additional memory, an RS232 (serial) interface, and auto-repeating keys.

Construction

The design and build of the Dragon has its fans and critics, but my own 32 has been receiving heavy use for over a year now and remains clean and unmarked, with no problems from the keyboard or any of the sockets.

The Dragon's connections to the outside world are, on the left-hand side, a TV socket, reset button (not 100 per cent reliable as it will on occasion wipe the memory rather than merely reset), 5-pin DIN sockets for left and right joysticks and cassette recorder, a parallel printer port for Centronics-type printers, and the new serial interface.

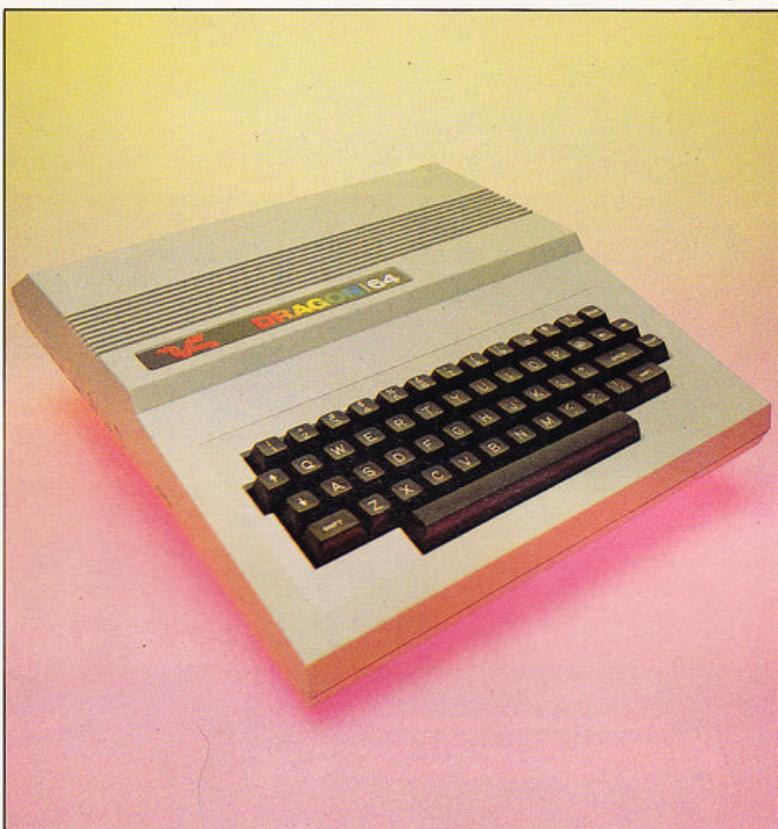
The rear of the machine has the mains socket, a monitor socket and the push-button on-off switch, with the right-hand side, having the cartridge slot, which holds things firmly. The mains button could be improved, it is hidden away where you can't see it in normal use. With the average human having considerably less memory capacity than the machine it is possible for the

Dragon to be on when you think it's off. But provided you also switch off at the mains, as you should, there ought not to be any problems.

Keyboard

There's a fairly conventional qwerty-style keyboard which has a satisfying typewriter feel to it, and the introduction of auto-repeat keys in 64K mode seems also to have done away with a noticeable problem on the 32, caused by the keyboard scanning routine. In checking to see if a key was pressed, the keyboard was scanned a block of keys at a time, and speedy typists found that if they hit two consecutive keys in the same block then the second would frequently not register, a considerable drawback to a machine with business and word processing potential.

Though not referring to this in the 25▶



Looks familiar? Compatibility with the Dragon 32 is a prime concern.

Documentation

Buyers receive a 176-page book, *An Introduction to Basic Programming Using the Dragon*, which will be familiar to owners of the earlier machine as it is the same. Strangely enough, some references to 'Dragon 32' in the text have been changed to 'Dragon', but not all of them. The drawing at the front of the book is still of the 32, not showing the additional interface that the 64 possesses.

The editing commands and error codes are still incomplete. The latter omits to explain UF and DN errors for instance, and the space battle program listed will still have your opponent's ship firing when you press your own joystick's fire button. In view of the flak that the manual received when the 32 was first reviewed, it seems rather penny-pinching not to provide 64



Side view of the Dragon 64 – you can see the extra serial interface, which is the major difference from the 32, clearly.



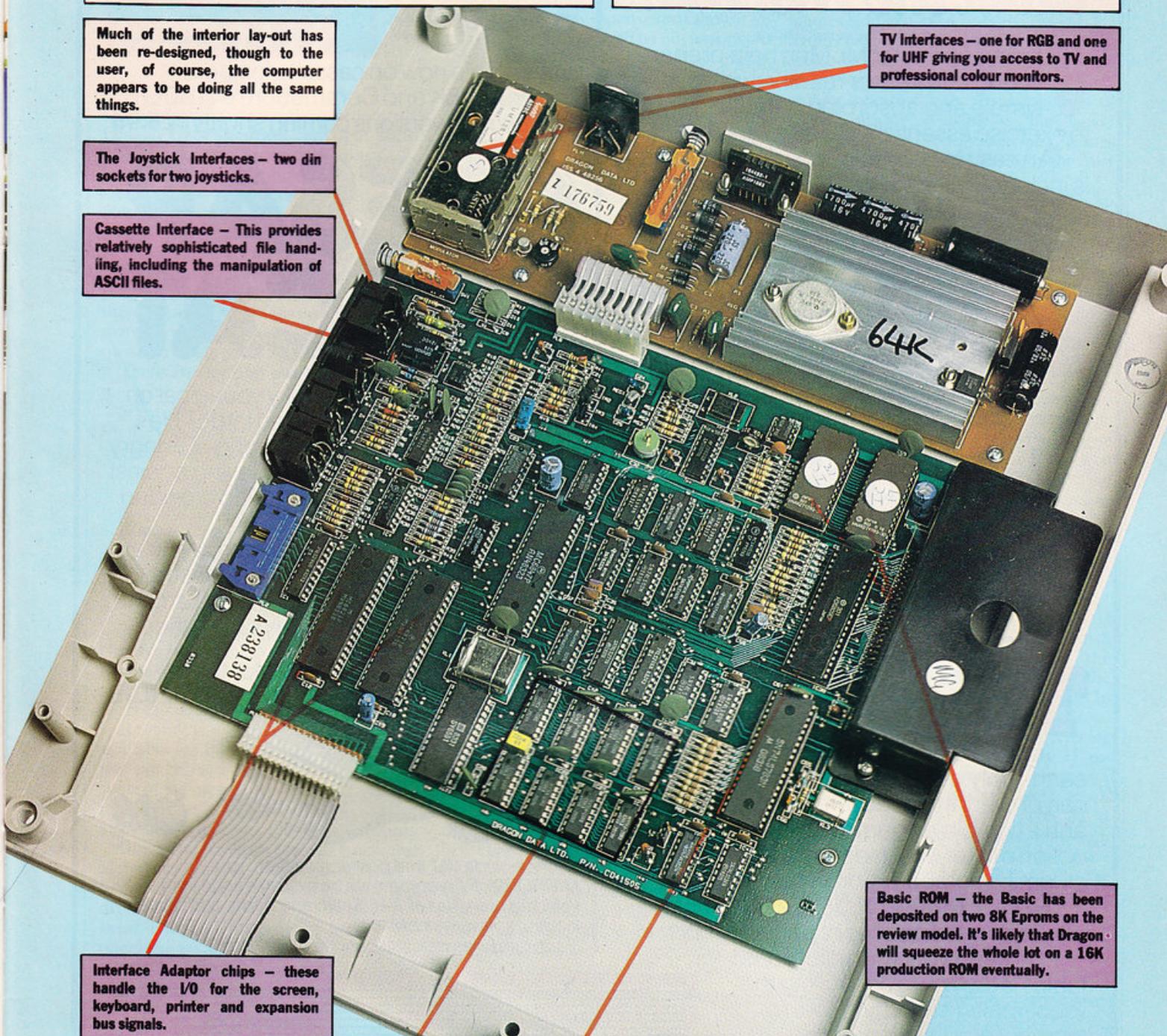
The games port side remains 32ish. Only the more business-like colour scheme distinguishes it from its predecessor.

Much of the interior lay-out has been re-designed, though to the user, of course, the computer appears to be doing all the same things.

The Joystick Interfaces – two din sockets for two joysticks.

Cassette Interface – This provides relatively sophisticated file handling, including the manipulation of ASCII files.

TV Interfaces – one for RGB and one for UHF giving you access to TV and professional colour monitors.

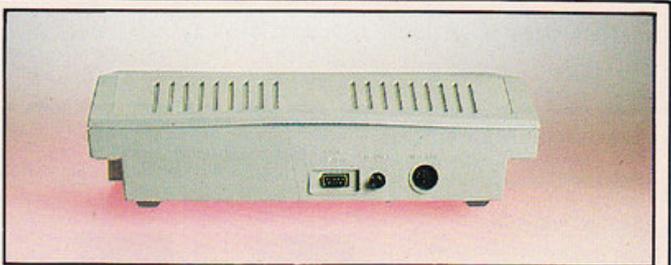


Interface Adaptor chips – these handle the I/O for the screen, keyboard, printer and expansion bus signals.

RAM – the varying configurations of the 32 have been replaced by a single line of eight 64K RAMs.

6809 Processor – the same as the chip in the Tandy Colour Computer so it is easy to convert programs for the Dragon. The 6809 has a close resemblance to the 6502, so it's possible to convert code from this processor as well.

Basic ROM – the Basic has been deposited on two 8K Eproms in the review model. It's likely that Dragon will squeeze the whole lot on a 16K production ROM eventually.



The rear of the 64 reveals sockets for the power, a monitor and the push-button on/off switch.

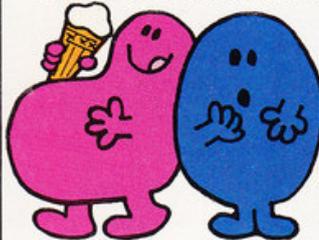
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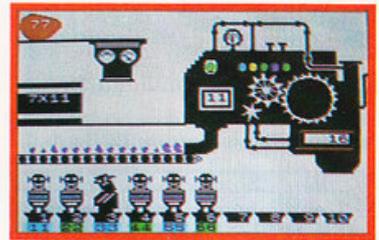
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PCN 1

supplement, the Dragon 64 has no such problems and could keep up perfectly with the fastest typing. The keys also seem to offer slightly more of a bounce-back to them, presumably to discourage lingering and getting auto-repeat, but this also serves to increase the user's typing speed. In view of this improvement it's a pity that the 64 still doesn't offer lower case letters on the screen. These are represented in reverse video (*ie* green against a black block) but do print out as lower case on printers.

Display

On switching on you are presented with the Dragon Data/Microsoft copyright notice in black against a green background, this being the standard printing layout. Green against black is also possible using completely lower case, and black against orange can be improvised if you know how. Although the machine offers nine colours (buff being the closest you'll get to white) your printing on the screen is limited to these upper case options unless you get a word-processing package or define your own characters using high-res graphics.

This is also the only way to mix text with graphics.

Screen layout is 32 x 16, rather limiting for the text, so for serious word processing a commercial package will be essential.

Storage

Initially the Dragon 64 is automatically in 32K mode, and a test of several cassettes and cartridges produced no problems with software designed for the 32. To switch to 64K mode you type EXEC (or EXEC 48000 if a previous EXEC address needs to be over-written) when the copyright notice changes from 1982 to 1983 and the cursor flashes blue instead of black.

What happens is that the Basic interpreter is copied into the top of the 64K RAM space and you now have 41,241 bytes available for Basic programming, though this can be increased to 45849 by freeing some of the memory reserved for graphics pages, and of course the full 64K remains available for machine code only programs.

One advantage the Dragon has is that almost any cassette recorder can be used to SAVE and LOAD programs, with disk drives also now available if you require them. Dragon Data is opting for the OS9 operating system, but FLEX will also be available from independent suppliers Microcare.

Expansion

If your interest doesn't begin and end with the computer itself, the fact that the Dragon 32 has now been around for a year means that expansion is already available. Dragon's own disk drives have appeared at last, and there are also rival drives from Cumana and Premier Microsystems. A range of products is available from companies like Premier and Compusense: screen dumpers, light pens, assemblers, monitors, Forth and so on.

The parallel interface is the essential Centronics-one, allowing you to connect

the Dragon up to most of the best printers around, with the serial interface adding a few more, notably micro manufacturers' 'own brand' printers.

Basic

The Microsoft Basic chosen by Dragon has attracted a generally favourable response as being one of the better Basic dialects around, both logical and easy to learn, while for speed of response tests show it to be roughly on a par with its obvious rival, the Commodore 64. As well as being reasonably powerful when it comes to graphics commands, it is also fairly close to Basics on one or two other machines, particularly the Tandy Colour Computer.

In use

The machine received for test couldn't be tuned in properly for sound, the volume of the TV needing to be turned up so high that the buzzing from the set drowned the sound being made.

There is one voice channel covering a range of five octaves, with two Basic sound commands: SOUND and PLAY. SOUND needs to be followed by two numbers representing pitch and duration, both being in the range of 1 to 255, with a pitch setting of 89 producing middle C. The actual noise produced is an organ-like note, and these can be arranged into tunes using the PLAY command.

There are four more useful sound commands, AUDIO ON and AUDIO OFF, which control the output of the cassette recorder to the TV speaker, and MOTOR ON and MOTOR OFF, governing the cassette motor.

In terms of graphics, the maximum resolution is a comparatively meagre 256 x 192, much less than the Commodore 64, Electron or Atari, but commercial software shows that the Dragon is quite capable of emulating arcade-standard graphics.

Though the Dragon boasts eight colours there's the usual proviso which applies to most machines: not all colours are available at the same time in high resolution. In the Dragon there's a kind of sliding scale between the detail available and the colours to go with it. There are five PMODE settings to choose from (there are in fact others not covered by the manual), and at the maximum 256 x 192 resolution, PMODE4, you can only use black and green or black and buff.

Two extremely useful and versatile commands have proved to be GET and PUT. With GET you can take a large or small chunk of the screen and store it in an array, and PUT allows you to retrieve and place it anywhere on the screen.

Software

A recent list of Dragon software contained over 160 items, these being mostly on the games side and even then the list was far from complete. One advantage the Dragon 64 will have, then, is that the software is tried and tested.

One reason for the large amounts of good software available is that Tandy software converts easily, and many games and adventures have been brought over from the US and adapted.

On the more serious side there are also several word processing packages as well as other business-oriented softwares.

Support

The only fly in the ointment as regards support for the 64 seems to be the uncertain financial state of the microcomputer industry generally, and to what extent Dragon Data is being affected by that. There will undoubtedly be a lot of back-up for the machine from the manufacturers, from the chain stores who stock the Dragon in their range, from the service agents that Dragon Data has been appointing now that initial guarantees on the 32 are running out, and from the software houses and small dealers, many of whom produce only Dragon products.

Verdict

Viewed in isolation the Dragon 64 is without doubt an impressive micro which can cater for a wide variety of users: the games player, the small business or the person wanting to learn programming. In terms of Dragon Data's own products, too, the 64 could be seen as a good deal, costing only £50 more than the Dragon 32 yet offering twice the memory.

Unfortunately it doesn't offer much more that is new. The Dragon 32 is probably a little too pricey to compete with its rivals and the 64 is competing with the likes of the Commodore 64 for roughly the same price, and the new Electron will be out in force soon.

It's hard, therefore to see the Dragon 64 emulating the early success of its one-year-old predecessor.

SPECIFICATION

Price	£225
Keyboard	Typewriter-style, 50 keys plus two shifts and space bar
Processor	M6809
RAM	64K
ROM	24K
Text screen	32 x 16
Graphics screen	Several resolutions available, from 128 x 96 to 256 x 192
Storage	Any cassette recorder, several disk drives available
Interfaces	Two joystick ports, cartridge port, serial and parallel interfaces
Language	Microsoft Basic
Distributor	Dragon Data, Kenfig Industrial Estate, Margam, Port Talbot SA13 2PE

Chris Rust continues his word processing program with routines to manipulate text, print it and save it

Words and actions

Last week we persuaded the Newbrain to give us a number of pages to type on. Now we want to move text about between pages, printer and tape. Once you've got this under control, you should be well on the way to producing your own word processor.

The Newbrain doesn't care what device you have attached to one of its streams. It will print or read data regardless of source or destination. So one routine can handle all text transfer. Routing is set by specifying two variable stream numbers, so (SOURCE) and tg (TARGET). A third stream, pg (PAGE) specifies the text screen in use, be it TARGET or SOURCE.

The master routine is called PUMP. It controls a number of subroutines to read and print text.

The active ingredients of PUMP are the commands: LINPUT#so (read string from device on stream No so); ?#tg (print string to stream No tg) and control code 5 (send line at cursor) which makes a string available to LINPUT. If you go back to the setting-up listing you will find that this code has been given the variable name rd (READ).

Trapstring

Use the set-up listing and appendix 3 of the Newbrain manual to unravel the variable names used in the PUT commands. Once mastered, the use of these mnemonic forms makes the program much easier to read.

The routine which elevates PUMP from mindless slave to intelligent servant is TRAPSTRING. TRAPSTRING allows you to define flag strings or characters which, inserted in a line of text, will modify the behaviour of PUMP by setting the routing flag m3.

This basic version of the program has three simple TRAPSTRING functions: "endend" marks the end of the text and halts execution of PUMP.

"endendend" marks the end of a tape file and stops PUMP from trying to read past the end of file. It is needed when LOADING text prepared on a differently configured version of PAGE EDITOR.

"remrem" allows insertion of remarks on the screen display. A line including "remrem" will SAVE but not PRINT.

If you want to define your own functions, the flag should be a word or character which will not occur in normal text. For your own use single graphics characters are more compact. I use the cumbersome flag words to help casual or first-time users.

You may notice that PUMP ignores the bottom line of the PAGE. Unfortunately, LINPUT always forces a line feed so it will not read the bottom line without losing the

top one. If you are worried about this you can always write your own version of LINPUT along the lines of the READ NUMBER routine described later.

Stream numbers

Three stream numbers are constants, these are:

KEYBOARD stream ky = 105
PRINTER stream pr = 108
TAPE stream tp = 101

Three variable names are used by the text handling routines:

TARGET stream tg
SOURCE stream so
PAGE stream pg
TARGET and SOURCE are the destina-

tion and origin of text being transferred. PAGE is the screen on which the cursor position is set and monitored.

These stream number variables are set at the start of each operation and control a number of multi-purpose routines.

Next week we will look at routines which use PUMP to route text. To get going in the meantime you can output a page to a printer as follows:

tg = pr: pg = 1: so = 1: GOSUB 22000 where 1 is the page number.

The first part of this article appeared in PCN issue 38. Back issues of PCN are available from the PCN Back Issue Service, 53-55 Frith Street, London W1A 2HC. The series will be concluded next week.

Text handling routines

PUMP Place cursor on top text line of PAGE Check pen position with PEN Read line of text from SOURCE with READ Check line for special functions with TRAPSTRING Print text to TARGET or execute special function	21999 REM PL:IP 22000 yy=3:xx=1:GOSUB22600 22010 GOSUB22500:GOSUB22200:GOSUB22300 22020 ONm3GOSUB22400,23000,23100,23200,23300:IFYy=11-1THEN RET 22030 GOTO22010
READ TITLE Place cursor at top left of PAGE Read page title pg\$(pg)	22099 REM READ TITLE 22100 PUT#pg,hm,rd:LINPUT#pg,pg\$(pg):RET
READ LINE If SOURCE is a screen then PUT control code rd (5:send line) to source Read PUMPSTRING pm\$ from SOURCE	22199 REM READ LINE 22200 IFeo<saTHENPUT#so,rd 22210 LINPUT#so,pm\$:RET
TRAPSTRING Check PUMPSTRING for special function indicator tp\$(If indicator present set flag m3 to special function number (same as tp\$(array subscript	22299 REM TRAP STRING 22300 m3=1:FORa=1TOtt:IFINSTR(pm\$,tr\$(a))>FALSETHENm3=a+1:a=tt 22310 NEXTa:RET
WRITE Print PUMPSTRING to TARGET	22399 REM WRITE 22400 ?#tg,pm\$:RET
PEN PUT control code yx (21: send cursor position) to PAGE GET cursor position as character No xx on line yy	22499 REM PEN 22500 PUT#pg,yx:GET#pg,xx,yy:RET
PLACE PUT control code xy (22: place cursor) to PAGE Which will place cursor at character No xx on line yy	22599 REM PLACE 22600 PUT#pg,xy,xx,yy:RET
READ CHARACTER PUT control code rc (20: send cursor character) to SOURCE GET ASC No of character at cursor position as ch RET	22699 REM READ CHARACTER 22700 PUT#so,rc:GETch:RET
DON'T PRINT If TARGET is not a printer then WRITE PUMPSTRING to TARGET Otherwise ignore this PUMPSTRING	22999 REM DON'T PRINT 23000 IFTg<>prTHENGOSUB22400 23010 RET
END OF TAPEFILE Set line number yy to appear to PUMP as if bottom of PAGE has been reached This will prevent PUMP from attempting to read past the end of the tape file.	23099 REM END OF TAPEFILE 23100 yy=11-1:RET
END OF TEXT If TARGET is not a printer then WRITE PUMPSTRING (which contains the flag	23199 REM END OF TEXT 23200 IFTg<>prTHENGOSUB22400 23210 yy=11-1:RET

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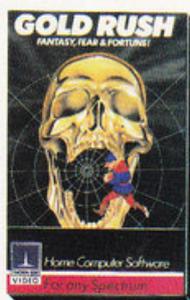
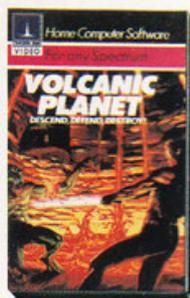
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In "Blockade Runner" (on 16k) the earth is under siege and you must get life-saving supplies through.

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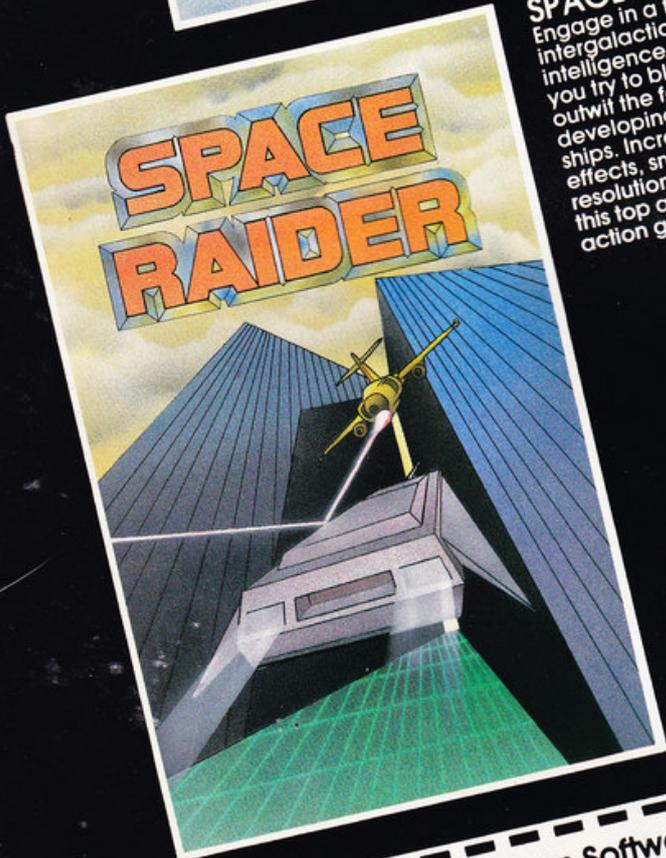
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commodore 
 and VIC 20

Killer caverns

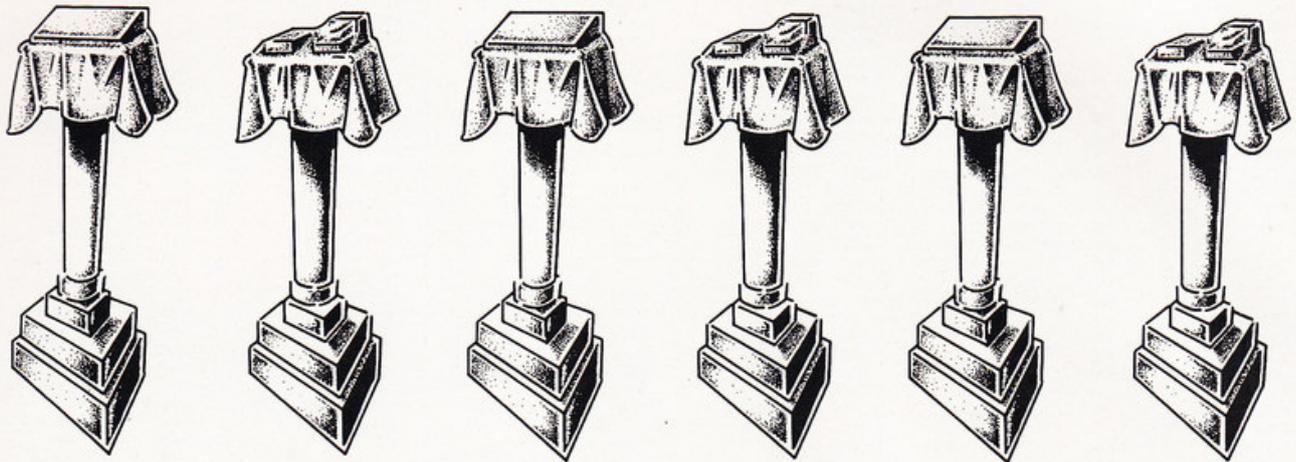
In last week's PCN we began the listing of SS Ram. Darren Eteo's Scramble-type game for the Dragon. If your fingers haven't worn out, this week's instalment

might change that for you. But persevere, because the game's well worth having, and will give you hours of amusement once you've finished.

Remember that you have to be particularly accurate when you're typing in machine code, because it's very difficult to debug it once you've made the mistakes. If you don't have the first part of the article, which appeared in Issue 38, you can get back issues from the PCN Back Issues Service, 53-55 Frith Street, London W1A.

0313 3A	430 ABX	0300	490 @NEXT2	648F	560 @RTS1
0314 7A0FCF	430 DEC @PLAYER-1	0300 AEA6	490 LDX A,Y	649F 800C	560 LDA #12
0317 2BEC	430 BNE @LOOP	0302 301F	490 LEAX -1,X	6491 B76FCF	560 STA @PLAYER-1
0319 39	430 RTS	0304 AF05	490 STX A,Y	649A CCAAAA	560 LDD #AAAA
031A	440 @CHECK	0306 8002	490 SUBA #2	6497	560 #BLANKED
031A F06FCD	440 LDD @PLAYER-3	0308 2EF6	490 BGT @NEXT2	6497 ED04	560 STD ,Y
031D 10030740	440 CMPD #000+320	030A 100E7030	490 LDY @TABLE+2	6493 31A020	560 LEAY 32,Y
0321 2403	440 BHS @HIGH	030E B0704E	490 LDA @TABLE	649C 7A6FCF	560 DEC @PLAYER-1
0323 C30021	440 ADDD #33	0311	490 @REPEAT	649F 20F6	560 BNE @BLANKED
0326	440 @HIGH	0311 E0A6	490 LDB A,Y	64A1 31A0F0B0	560 LEAY -304,Y
0326 1003103F	440 CMPD #10FF-132	0313 C41F	490 ANDB #31	64A5 0E7012	560 LDX @MPICTURE
032A 2303	440 BLS @LOW	0315 C11F	490 CMPB #31	64A9 3003	560 LDA #3
032C 930021	440 SUBD #33	0317 2015	490 BNE @OKED	64AA B76FCF	560 STA @PLAYER-1
032F	440 @LOW	0319 0E704F	490 LDX @TABLE+1	64AD 0E7012	560 LDX @MPICTURE
032F F06FCD	440 STD @PLAYER-3	031C F0704E	490 LDB @TABLE	64B0	560 @PUT!
0332 C41F	440 ANDB #31	031E AE85	490 LDX B,X	64B0 EC01	570 LDD ,X++
0334 C11C	440 CMPB #28	031F 4A	490 DECA	64B2 ED04	570 STD ,Y
0336 2308	440 BLS @OKAY	0321 AF05	490 STX A,Y	64B4 31A020	570 LEAY 32,Y
0338 F06FCD	440 LDD @PLAYER-3	0324 1C	490 INCA	64B7 7A6FCF	570 DEC @PLAYER-1
033B 830001	440 SUBD #1	0325 C002	490 SUBB #2	64BA 20F4	570 BNE @PUT!
033E 200A	440 BRA @STORE	0327 F7704E	490 STB @TABLE	64BC 3512	570 PULS A,X
0340	440 @OKAY	032A 54	490 LSRB	64BE 20A1	570 BRA @RETURN
0340 C102	440 CMPB #2	032B F7708A	490 STB @TABLE1	64C0	580 @WHAT
0342 2403	440 BHS @RTD	032E	490 @OKED	64C0 0155	580 CMPA #355
0344 F06FCD	440 LDD @PLAYER-3	032F 0002	490 SUBA #2	64C2 2706	580 BEQ @WALL
0347 C30001	440 ADDD #1	6400 0101	490 CMPA #1	64C4 0155	580 CMPB #355
034A	440 @STORE	6402 220D	490 BHI @REPEAT	64C6 2702	580 BEQ @WALL
034A F06FCD	440 STD @PLAYER-3	6404 39	490 RTS	64C8 20C5	580 BRA @RTS1
034D	440 @RTD	6405	510 @INPUT	64CA	590 @WALL
034D 39	440 RTS	6405 10BE0FCA	510 LDY @PLAYER-8	64CA 800C	590 LDA #12
034E	450 @XJOY	6409 A03F	510 LDA -1,Y	64CC B76FC6	590 STA @PLAYER-10
034E BE6FCD	450 LDX @PLAYER-3	640B AB3E	510 ADDA -2,Y	64CF CCAAAA	590 LDD #AAAA
0351 B0015B	450 LDA #47	640D C620	510 LDB #32	64D2	590 @CLS1
0354 9110	450 CMPA #16	640F 30	510 MUL	64D2 ED04	590 STD ,Y
0356 2407	450 BHS @GREATER1	6410 C3057E	510 ADD #45FF-123	64D4 31A020	590 LEAY 32,Y
0358 1E01	450 EXG D,X	6413 F06FC8	510 STD @PLAYER-8	64D7 7A6FC6	590 DEC @PLAYER-10
035A 030000	450 SUBD #96	6416 1F02	510 TFR D,Y	64DA 20F6	590 BNE @CLS1
035D 200D	450 BRA @DONE1	6418 B0704E	510 LDA @TABLE	64DC 100E704F	590 LDY @TABLE+1
035F	450 @GREATER1	641B 0E704E	510 CMPA #50	64E0 B0704E	590 LDA @TABLE
035F B130	450 CMPA #48	641D 8132	510 BLS @OKAYT	64E3 31A6	590 LEAY A,Y
0361 2307	450 BLS @SAME1	641D 230A	510 LDA #48	64E5 10A0A4	590 LDY ,Y
0363 1E01	450 EXG D,X	6421 0E704E	510 STA @TABLE	64E8 10AF94	590 STY ,X
0365 C30000	450 ADDD #96	6424 44	510 LSRB	64EB B0704E	590 LDA @TABLE
0368 2002	450 BRA @DONE1	6425 B7708A	510 STA @TABLE1	64EE 8002	590 SUBA #2
036A	450 @SAME1	6428 39	510 RTS	64F0 B7704E	590 STA @TABLE
036A 1E01	450 EXG D,X	6429	510 @OKAYT	64F3 44	590 LSRB
036C	450 @DONE1	6429 8002	510 ADDA #2	64F4 B7708A	590 STA @TABLE1
036C F06FCD	450 STD @PLAYER-3	642B 0E704F	510 LDX @TABLE+1	64F7 3512	590 PULS A,X
036F 39	450 RTS	642E 10AF96	510 STY A,X	64F9 10FF05	590 LBRB @RETUSM
0370	460 @PUT	6431 B7704E	510 STA @TABLE	64FC	600 @METOR
0370 10BE0FCA	460 LDY @PLAYER-8	6434 44	510 LSRB	64FC 000113	600 LDA 275
0374 A0A0	460 LDA ,Y+	6435 0E708B	510 LDX @TABLE+1+1	64FF 10BE0FCA	600 LDY @PLAYER-6
0376 B76FCF	460 STA @PLAYER-1	6438 C001	510 LDB #1	6503 843F	600 ANDA #63
0379 9E051F	460 LDX #600+31	643A E706	510 STB A,X	6505	600 @PRINTAGAIN
037C C620	460 LDB #32	643C B7708A	510 STA @TABLE1	6505 A13F	600 CMPA -1,Y
037E 0055	460 LDA #355	643F 0003	510 LDA #3	6507 2303	600 BLS @SURE
0380	460 @FLOOP	6441 B76FCF	510 STA @PLAYER-1	6509 44	600 LSRB
0380 A784	460 STA ,X	6444 0E7012	510 LDX @MPICTURE	650A 20F3	600 BRA @PRINTAGAIN
0382 3A	460 ABX	6447	510 @NEXT3	650C	600 @SURE
0383 7A6FCF	460 DEC @PLAYER-1	6447 EC01	510 LDD ,X++	650C C620	600 LDB #32
0385 26F8	460 BNE @FLOOP	6449 ED04	510 STD ,Y	650E AB3E	600 ADDA -2,Y
0388 8000	460 LDA #00	644B 31A020	510 LEAY 32,Y	6510 3D	600 MUL
038A A784	460 STA ,X	644E 7A6FCF	510 DEC @PLAYER-1	6511 C3051E	600 ADDD #61E
038C 3A	460 ABX	6451 20F4	510 BNE @NEXT3	6514 1F01	600 TFR D,X
038D A0A0	460 LDA ,Y+	6453 39	510 RTS	6516 0009	600 LDA #3
038F B76FCF	460 STA @PLAYER-1	6454	510 @MOVING	6518 B76FCF	600 STA @PLAYER-1
0392 80AA	460 LDA #AA	6454 0E708B	510 LDX @TABLE+1+1	651B 100E7030	600 LDY @METOR
0394	460 @SLOOP	6457 B0708A	510 LDA @TABLE1	651F	600 @LOOPS
0394 A784	460 STA ,X	645A 2001	510 BNE @LOOPA	651F ECA1	600 LDD ,Y++
0396 3A	460 ABX	645C 39	510 RTS	6521 ED04	600 STD ,X
0397 7A6FCF	460 DEC @PLAYER-1	645F 2004	510 BNE @UP	6523 308920	600 LEAX 32,X
039A 20F8	460 BNE @SLOOP	6461	510 @RETURN	6526 7A6FCF	600 DEC @PLAYER-1
039C 8000	460 LDA #00	6461 4A	510 DECA	6528 39	600 BNE @LOOPS
039E A784	460 STA ,X	6462 26F9	510 BNE @LOOPA	652C	600 RTS
03A0 3A	460 ABX	6464 39	510 RTS	652C 10BE0FCA	610 @PDUMP
03A1 8055	460 LDA #55	6465	510 @UP	6530 8063F	610 LDY @PLAYER-8
03A3	460 @TLOOP	6465 3412	510 PSHS A,X	6532 AB3E	610 LDA -1,Y
03A3 A784	470 STA ,X	6467 0113	510 CMPA #25	6534 C620	610 LDB #32
03A5 3A	470 ABX	6469 230D	510 BLS @OKA	6536 3D	610 MUL
03A6 8C10E0	470 CMPX #10E0	646B 0018	510 LDA #24	6537 C3051E	610 ADDD #000+1E
03A9 23F8	470 BLS @TLOOP	646D B7708A	510 STA @TABLE1	653A 1F01	610 TFR D,X
03AB 100C7104	470 CMPY #0SCREEN+32	6470 0030	510 LDA #48	653C 100E7024	610 LDY @DUMP
03AF 2304	470 BLS @T	6472 B7704E	510 STA @TABLE	6540 0000	610 LDA #6
03B1 100E70E6	470 LDY #0SCREEN+2	6475 3512	510 PULS A,X	6542 B76FCF	610 STA @PLAYER-1
03B5	470 @T	6477 39	510 RTS	6545	610 @DUMPFLOOP
03B5 100F0FCA	470 STY @PLAYER-8	6478	510 @OKA	6545 ECA1	610 LDD ,Y++
03B9 39	470 RTS	6478 48	510 LSLA	6547 ED04	610 STD ,X
03BA	480 @SCROLL	6479 9E704F	510 LDX @TABLE+1	6549 308920	610 LEAX 32,X
03BA 9E072C	490 LDX #000+300	647C 3006	510 LEAX A,X	654C 7A6FCF	610 DEC @PLAYER-1
03BD	480 @AGAIN	647E 10A094	510 LDY ,X	654F 20F4	610 BNE @DUMPFLOOP
03BD A001	480 LDA ,X	6481 31A0C0	510 LEAY -64,Y	6551 39	610 RTS
03BF A700	480 STR ,X+	6484 10AF84	510 STY ,X	6552	610 @HITS
03C1 8C1000	480 CMPX #10FF-255	6487 ECA1	510 LDD ,Y	6552 BE6FCD	610 LDX @PLAYER-3
03C4 23F7	480 BLS @AGAIN	6489 1003AAA	510 CMPD #AAAA	6555 0000	610 LDA #6
03C6 100E704F	490 LDY @TABLE+1	648D 2031	510 BNE @WHAT	6557	610 @BLOOPS
03CA B0704E	490 LDA @TABLE			6557 E084	610 LDB ,X
03CD 2001	490 BNE @NEXT2			6559 308920	610 LEAX 32,X
03CF 39	490 RTS				

Glittering prizes



**PERSONAL
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THE SUNDAY TIMES

Vote for the best in microcomputing and you could win a micro and software. As part of the 1984 British Microcomputer Awards, *PCN* is offering all readers the chance to vote for the products that you think are outstanding.

BMA 1984 will be the most important event in the microcomputing calendar. It is organised by The Sunday Times and VNU, publishers of *Personal Computer News*, and *PCN* is hosting two of the awards — Peripheral of the Year, and the Home Software Award.

But because *PCN* readers are involved in all aspects of microcomputing, *PCN* is going to nominate for all ten categories. So if you want to put your favourite product in the limelight, let us

know about it. A panel of *PCN* judges will consider the nominations and forward a selection to a central judging panel of experts in the micro field. They will have the task of deciding the top three nominations in each category and of choosing the winners.

On these pages you'll find a complete list of categories and the criteria on which the products will be judged. Send us your nominations on the form opposite — remembering to include the reasons for your choice. The awards will be presented at a ceremony in London in March — and you could be a winner too.

All correctly completed nomination forms will enter a free draw with two Oric micros and software as the prizes.

Categories

1 Business Micro This award will be presented to the maker of the machine which, in the opinion of the judges, offers the best value for money. Essential requirements are that the machine has a recommended price of less than £8,000 including operating system, CPU, keyboard, disks and monitor. It must be disk-based, come with at least a 90-day guarantee, and have a wide range of business software.

2 Business Software The business software award will be presented to the software house giving best value for money and optimum efficiency for general business use. The software should be disk-based with a recommended price of less than £1,500 per package or module.

3 Home Microcomputer This award will go to the maker of the machine giving the user ease of programming and displaying the best use of colour, sound and speed. Value for money is again important and the micro must not cost more than £500.

4 Home Software The software house winning this award will have published a product which does the most to aid efficiency in the home. The judges will look for flexibility, value and user friendliness. Top price is £50.

5 Creative Software The award for creative software will be presented to the inventor of a software concept which the judges rule has made the greatest use of and contribution to, microcomputing. The award will also recognise the manufacturer

which first launched the concept as a marketable product.

6 Game of the Year Plenty to choose from here. Which game offers the greatest lasting appeal, playability and use of the machine? As always, value for money counts as well.

7 Consumer Award The consumer award will be presented to the company or individual judged to have done the most to advance consumer understanding and efficient use of microcomputers. The judges will look for an individual or group who have made an outstanding contribution to microcomputing to the benefit of users.

8 Peripheral of the Year This award will go to the most innovative peripheral which enhances the features and potential of a microcomputer. Good value is a key consideration.

9 Software of the Year The recipient of this award will be the software house judged to have published a product providing the simplest way of effectively solving a problem. The software will be judged as an aid so the judges will examine the way it carries out the task the user wants to complete. User friendliness, flexibility and value are of prime importance.

10 Microcomputer of the Year The micro will be the one which, in the opinion of the judges, is the best to have appeared on the market in the year to November 1. User friendliness, flexibility, software support, expandability, good design and price will be taken into consideration. Recommended price must be less than £8,000 and new versions of older models are eligible.

RULES

In categories 1-5 (business micro, business software, home micro, home software and creative software) manufacturers may nominate their own products which need not have been made in Britain but must have been available for purchase from retail outlets in the UK by November 1, 1983.

In categories 6, 8, 9, 10 (game, peripheral, software and micro of the year) manufacturers may nominate their own product which need not have been made in Britain but must have been available for purchase from retail outlets in the UK between November 1, 1982, and November 1, 1983.

Employees of VNU Business Publications BV, the sponsors or any individuals associated with the British Microcomputing Awards are ineligible to place a nomination with the exception of the six VNU title judging panels which may each nominate up to six entries.

The decision of the judges is final and no correspondence will be entered into. All nominations must be received by noon on January 5, 1984.



Enter your nomination for each category and explain, in not more than 30 words, the reason for your choice, using another sheet of paper if necessary. You should consider the guidelines given in each category on the facing page.

Category 1: Business Micro
Reasons for choice

Category 2: Business Software
Reasons for choice

Category 3: Home Micro
Reasons for choice

Category 4: Home Software
Reasons for choice

Category 5: Creative Software
Reasons for choice

Category 6: Game of the Year
Reasons for choice

Category 7: Consumer Award
Reasons for choice

Category 8: Peripheral of the Year
Reasons for choice

Category 9: Software of the Year
Reasons for choice

Category 10: Micro of the Year
Reasons for choice

Your name
Address

Send your nominations (before noon, January 5, 1984) to:
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Getting bored with the old black-and-white? Bill Davies discovers a colourful alternative.



Technicolour Tandy

A price breakthrough by Tandy is an event in itself, since Tandy watchers have always been aware that the Fort Worth-based computer/electronics company has never attempted to break into the cut-throat low cost market.

At £600 the new Tandy CGP-220 seven colour Ink Jet printer is very competitively priced.

First impressions

The printer comes in a substantially protected box with polystyrene and polythene covering. Opening the box the

first surprise is the new colour scheme which has been adopted by Tandy for all the new product range. Instead of the traditional black and silver, the CGP-220 is housed in a cream plastic case.

Powering it up for use provided no problems either, since Tandy now ensures that all products are fitted with a three-pin 13amp plug to conform with British standards. Other manufacturers please note.

Documentation

Here I'm afraid Tandy let me down. In my

experience Tandy computer manuals are generally some of the best on the market, but the manual with the CGP-220 is somewhat lacking to say the least. It's laid out and printed in the normal Tandy printer manual layout, but bearing in mind the revolutionary design/concept of the printer I was disappointed to find there was little in it that actually describes exactly what the printer is and does.

It took considerable time and effort to discover the method of printing. Briefly the printer is a form of spark jet printer. The ink is produced in minute quantities and transferred to the paper by means of a fast high ignition spark, each dot of the matrix requiring a separate function.

To understand how the colours are reproduced one has to step back into basic physics.

In television and monitors, colours are produced by mixing light rays. In this system — commonly known as the RGB method — red, green and blue light rays are projected on a surface and mixing these three colours generates all others.

A second method is based on the mixture of pigments such as ink or paint. In

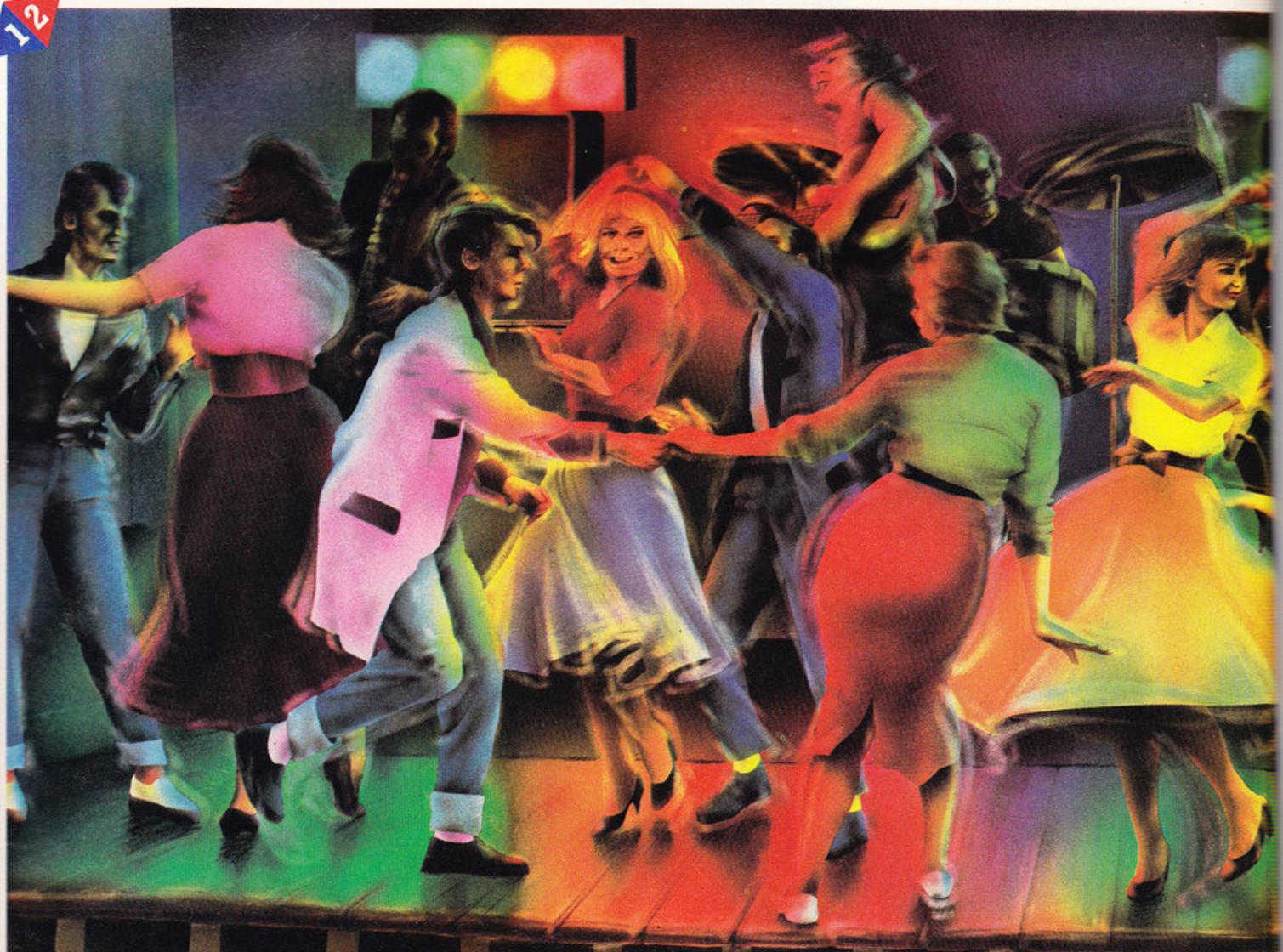
John Price Studios

Normally one would send two sets of codes to the printer - "27", known as an ESCape code followed by two other digits for the actual function. The CGP-220, being a colour printer obviously requires slightly more information, so there fore one has to send three sets of digits to it when changing colours.

Each colour has been allocated its own number between 48 and 55:

BLACK	48	YELLOW	51	VIOLET	54
RED	49	BLUE	52	WHITE	55
GREEN	50	MAGENTA	53		

so to change the text from black to red for example you would have to send the code 27 (ESC), 84 (telling it you are changing colour), 49 (red). These codes can either be inserted into the text if you are using a word processing program or into the basic program if you are writing a program which requires colour changes.





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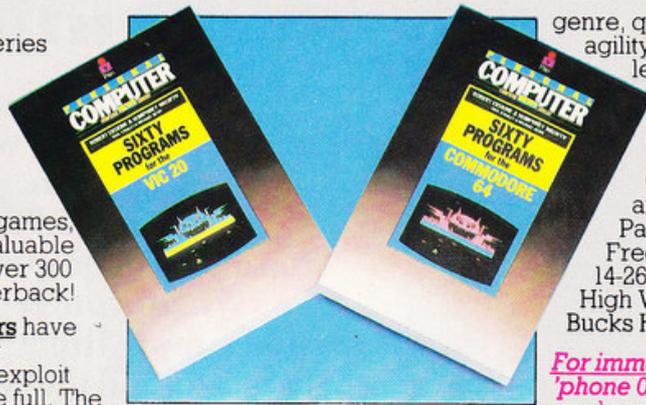
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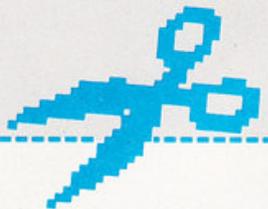
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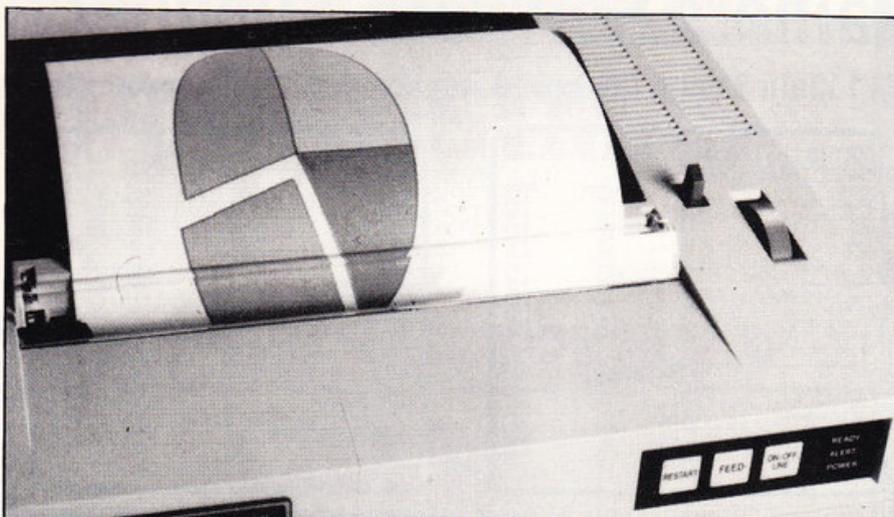


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PCN



The CGP-220 will print either standard or elongated characters, these are selected using the control codes, but the printer defaults to standard text character code on power up.

Although the printer comes with the standard "American" character set, the European character set can be selected by programming the appropriate control codes. To find the £ sign for example means that you have to instruct the printer to find ASCII character "163".

◀ 35 this method, the colours yellow, magenta and cyan are mixed in different combinations to produce other colours.

The CGP-220 uses the second method. The built-in software in the printer converts what the monitor sees as RGB into mixtures of the coloured inks available. It does mean that you probably don't have the full range of colours available that you would expect to find on your television set, but it should be a close approximation.

Getting started

Familiarising yourself with the machine is the first thing to do. Although the ink packs should already be inserted when you get the machine, they don't really cause much of a problem. You should have two packs both the size of a packet of cigarettes. One contains black ink and the other has yellow, magenta and cyan. They are contained in rigid containers and the ink is sealed in airtight bags.

With the power off they are inserted into a small drawer located along the bottom front of the machine. After they are installed, you are warned not to take them out until they are exhausted. Being the inquisitive type, I did, with disastrous results — ink all over the place. To protect the ink supply during transportation and lengthy periods of inactivity there is a lever on the top of the printer which can be positioned to seal off the supply.

The printer takes either roll paper or single sheets — there is no tractor feed. Again inserting paper is no problem.

The controls for the printer are located on the front. They are touch sensitive for 'restart', 'feed' and 'on/off line'. Alongside are three LEDs — ready, alert and power.

When you turn the power on the red 'alert' light blinks for about ten seconds as the ink supply is made ready. The red alert light also comes on when you run out of paper or when the printer goes off-line for

any reason. Once the situation has been rectified, pressing the restart key should set the printer off again.

On the top left of the printer alongside the paper platten is a green lever which provides three functions. Locking the carriage for transit, capping and uncapping the ink nozzle, and a pump to provide a better ink supply.

After loading the paper it is advisable to check the ink supply and ensure that all colours are working. Pressing the FEED button immediately after unlocking the carriage should produce a horizontal bar. There is also a self test function which prints out all the alphanumeric symbols. Each line is printed in a different colour.

The next step is to connect it up to the

'The printer is exceptionally quiet . . . but slow'

computer. The CGP-220 is provided with serial and parallel connections and there is a baud selection switch for 600 or 2400 baud rate for the serial interface. Since I already use a Tandy printer I had the necessary cable to hand, but it is necessary to watch the pin connections on the parallel cable, since the BBC and the Tandy system differ on the location of two pins. Numbers 10 and 11 have to be changed round, otherwise busy and acknowledge get mixed up.

In use

The first thing you notice is that the printer is exceptionally quiet, although the print head appears to do an awful lot of work. Each row of dots is printed in a separate operation, which means that for one line of type the print head has to make seven

passes over the paper to produce the text.

The computer communicates with the printer with a series of control codes. These codes are used to tell the printer exactly what you want it to do. As on most printers the information is sent as numbers between 0 and 255. A control code would be used to change the print size, or a linefeed or to change the colour of the text.

Normally you would send two sets of codes to the printer — 271, known as an ESCape code, followed by two other digits for the actual function. The CGP-220, being a colour printer, obviously requires slightly more information, so you have to send three sets of digits to it when changing colours.

Each colour has been allocated its own number between 48 and 55: black, red, green, yellow, blue, magenta, violet, white.

So to change the text from black to red, for example, you would have to send the code 27 (ESC), 84 (telling it you are changing colour), 49 (red). These codes can either be inserted into the text if you are using a word processing program or into the Basic program if you are writing a program which requires colour changes.

The CGP-220 will print either standard or elongated characters. These are selected using control codes, but the printer defaults to standard text character code on power up.

Although the printer comes with an American character set, the European character set can be selected by programming the appropriate control codes.

Tandy say the printer's biggest selling point will be its ability to provide colour printouts of graphics, bar charts, graph tables etc. I have no doubt that this is true — the machine is certainly capable of producing a variety of colours. But the manual is extraordinarily vague about the actual mechanics of it all. As you would expect, many of the instructions in the manual are aimed at the Tandy computer owner, and all the demonstration programs use the LPRINT instruction.

The print speed is very slow — claimed to be about 37 cps. This does mean that anyone wanting to use it to print text will have to wait a long time, and because there is no built-in buffer it will tie up the computer for really long periods while it is performing its tasks.

Verdict

This printer provides colour printing at a price that many people who may have shied away in the past could well afford. Like all Tandy printers it is fully compatible with most micros on the market, and I am sure will be of great use to educational establishments and businesses who want graphics work carried out, but feel that the very high cost of the other colour printers on the market is not worth it. But for the home user it is an expensive luxury, unless you are really keen on producing colourful graphics dumps.

There is also competition in the form of the Seikosha GP-700A which offers seven-colour print at a lower price — under £500.



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Specvaders	48	HE	5.95
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Penetrator	48	ME	6.95
Terror Daktil	48	ME	6.95
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Trans-Am	48	UL	5.50
Manic Miner	16/48	BB	5.95
Styx	16/48	BB	5.95

VIC 20 SPECTRUM UPDATE

software at discount prices — Send s.a.e. for a full list.

Game	Ram	Author	Price
Startek 3000	48	DK	4.95
Slicker Puzzle	16	DK	6.95
Trom	16	DK	5.95
Golf	16	DK	4.95
Diet	48	DK	6.95
Speed Duel	48	DK	5.95
Apple Jam	48	DK	5.95
Personal Finance	48	DK	6.95
Maziacs	48	DK	6.95
Hunchback	48	OC	5.90
Rescue	48	OC	5.90
Digger Dan	48	OC	5.90
Repulsar	16/48	SK	5.95
Firebirds	16/48	SK	5.95
Lunar Jetman	48	UL	5.50
Atic Atac	48	UL	5.50
3D Spacewars	16/48	HE	5.95
Traxx	48	OS	6.95
Ant Attack	48	OS	6.95
Bugaboo	48	OS	6.95
Aquaplane	48	OS	6.95

ZX 81

Game	Ram	Author	Price
Inca Curse	16	AR	5.95
Ship of Doom	16	AR	5.95
Krakit	16	AR	9.95
Galaxians	16	AR	5.95
IK Games Pack	16	AR	6.00
Asteroids	16	OU	3.95
Invaders	16	OU	3.95
Munchies	16	OU	3.95
Croaka/Crawla	16	OU	3.95
Maze Death Race	16	OU	3.95
Alien	16	PS	3.95
Ghost Hunt	16	PS	3.95
Star Trek	16	PS	3.95
Krazy Kong	16	PS	3.95
Hopper	16	PS	3.95
Octopusy	16	PE	3.45
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Tape 2 Starfighter	16	JK	3.95
Tape 3 Catacomb	16	JK	4.95
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SU — Sumlock; SO — Solar; PI — Pixel; IM — Imagine; AN — Anirog; UL — Ultimate; ME — Melbourne;
HE — Hewson Consultants; IP — Impact; AR — Artic; QU — Quicksilver; DK — DKtronics; OC — Ocean; PS — Pss;
SK — Softek; PE — Peaksoft; JK — J. K. Grege; NG — New Generation; CD — CDS; TE — Terminal; BB — Bug-Byte.

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Vol 13

Part 1

CHRISTMAS MICRO BUYER'S GUIDE

VIC 20

ORIC 1

TANDY MC-10

APPLE IIe

AQUARIUS

ATARI 1000XL

LASER

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SORD M-5

BBC B

NEC

TANDY COLOUR

LYNX

APRICOT

COLOUR GENIE

SHARP MZ700

ELECTRON

DRAGON 32

IBM PC-1

COMMODORE 64

SPECTRUM

PULL OUT AND KEEP

How to buy a micro

If you're thinking of buying a micro, you've probably already decided you need a guide. And if you've been looking for any length of time, contradictory advice from sales assistants may even have made you wonder if you need a guide to the guides.

But before you despair, remember that micros today are better and cheaper than they've ever been before, so if you choose wisely, you'll get a bargain. But equally, if you get it wrong, and buy a micro that doesn't suit you, you could end up putting yourself off the beasts for a very long time.

So how do you start? If you're new to micros, it's possibly best to stick to the more popular machines, because although you may find a gem just right for you somewhere in the micro jungle, you're much more likely to pick up a complete turkey.

Your first step should be to find out what you can afford — there's no point in spending your time salivating over a Sirius if your wallet will only fit a ZX81. So you should first list the micros that fall into your price range, and then decide between them on the basis of what you want from your micro.

Inevitably you're the one who's going to be best equipped to say why you want to buy a micro, but there are a number of common reasons:

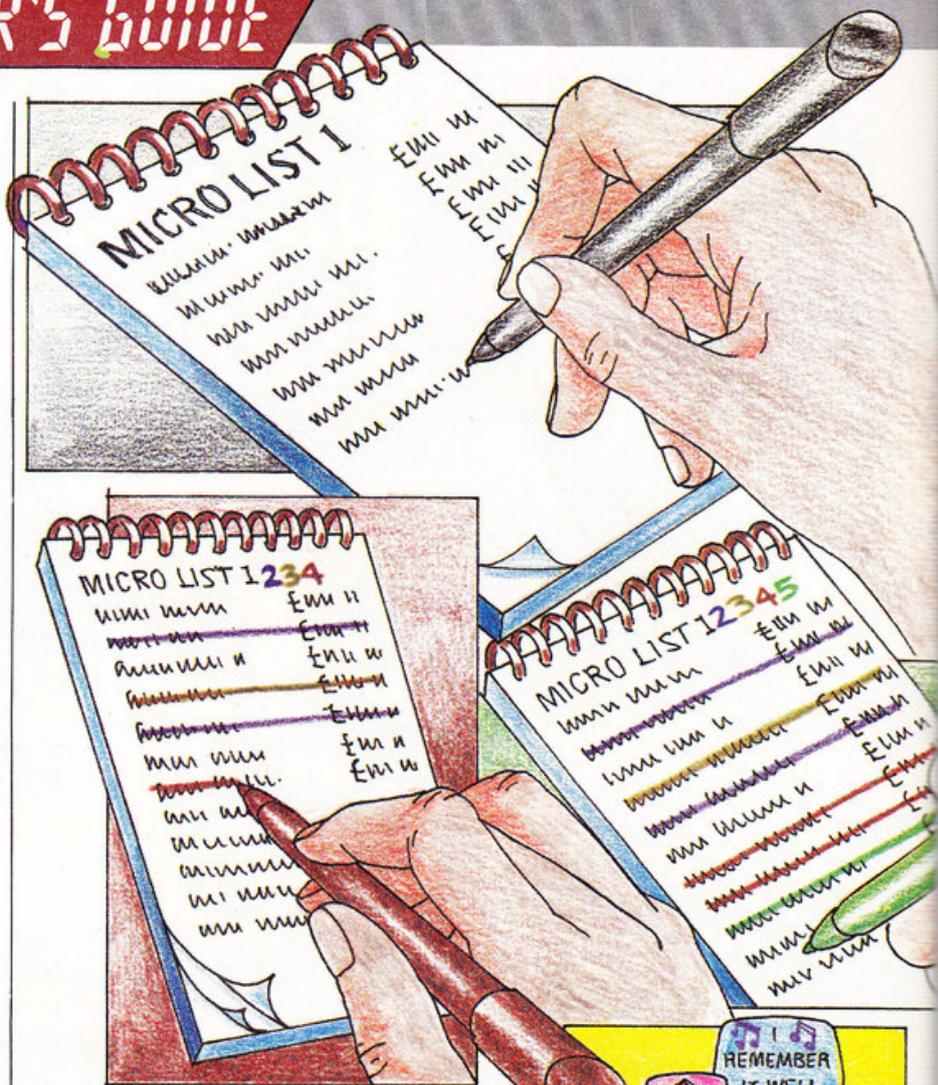
- 1 You feel you want to learn about programming, or
- 2 You want to play games
- 3 You want to use a micro for home filing
- 4 You think a micro would be helpful in your business

It's likely that you'll fall into several of these categories, but bear in mind, the more you want from your micro, the more it's liable to cost. Naturally you'll still want to get the best deal that you can, and therefore you should be looking at the expansion potential of your choice, but again this will cost money.

The availability of software is also something that should concern you. For example, you could buy a dynamic new machine with specifications streets ahead of other micros in its price range. But unless you just want the machine to write your own programs, you'll almost inevitably have to wait, first for the machine, and then for people to start writing and selling the software.

In the case of some machines, the now deceased Jupiter Ace for example, this never happens, so if you decide on a new and untried machine you should either be quite straight in your mind that you're either going to write your own software, or that a wide body of software is guaranteed.

Perhaps a word about guarantees would be in order at this juncture. The micro industry has a sorry track record on promises, to the extent



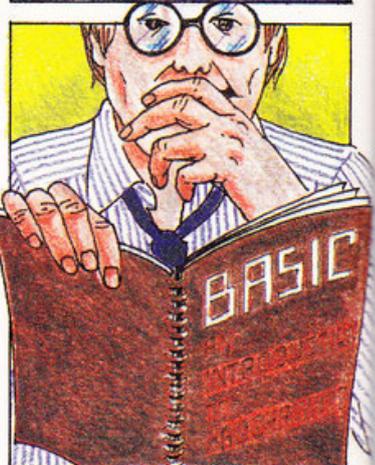
where it is the exception rather than the rule when a product is launched on time. So when the word is a micro is due to be launched in the next few months, take it with a pinch of salt, as you may find yourself hanging on for a lot longer than you bargained.

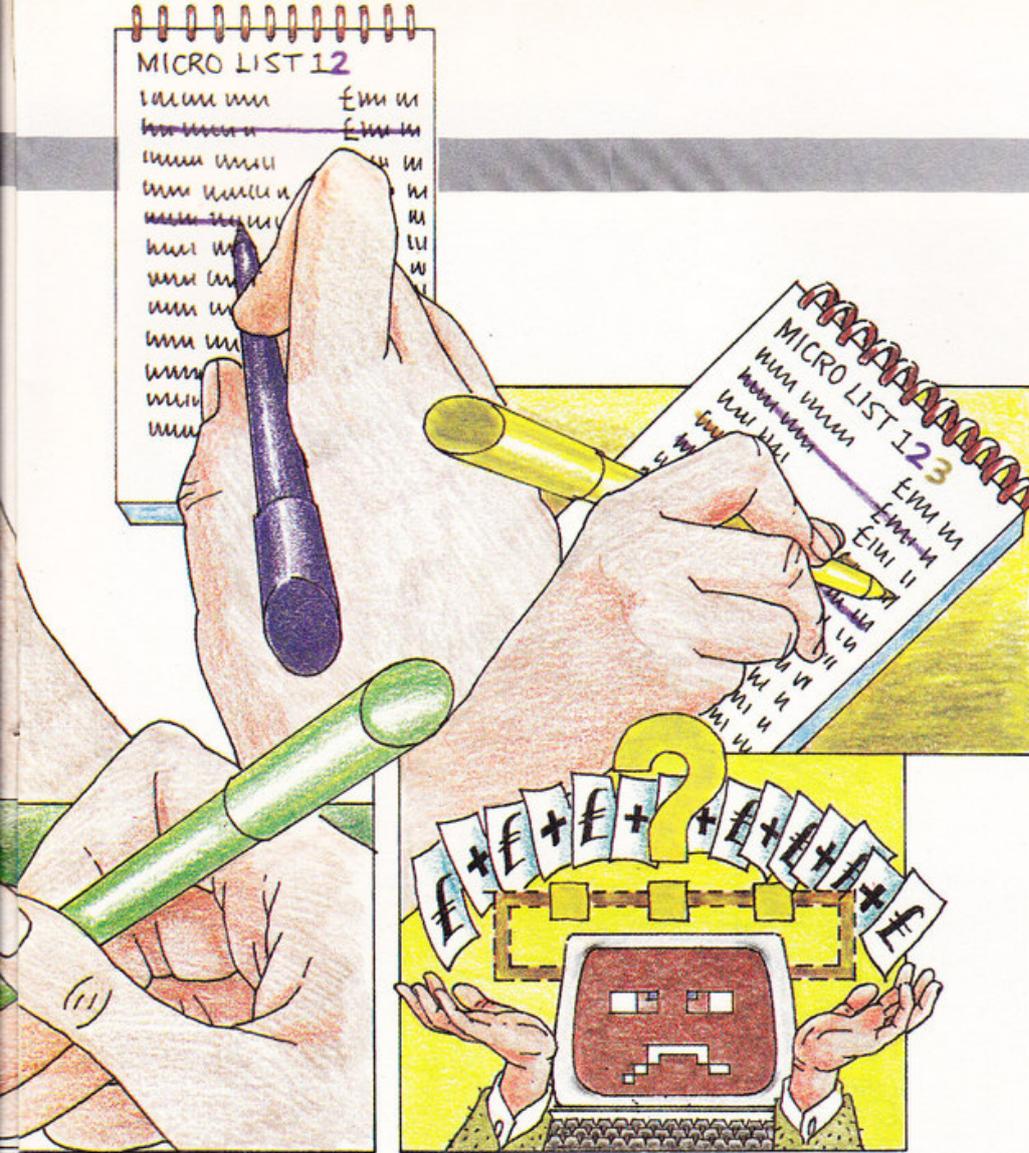
Similarly, if you decide you're going to need add-ons, either immediately or in the near future, buy a machine that already has them available. You could wait a long time — and plenty of people already have — for a printer interface and disk drives for your micro, and if you happened to be buying a micro for word processing, you'd feel pretty silly, check?

If you want a micro to learn about programming, you may not need to be so concerned about support. Unless you're feeling particularly masochistic, you'll probably want to buy one with a good, well-debugged Basic, but provided it's got that, along with good documentation, it's a safe bet you've got enough to get started.

For example, both BBC and Sinclair Basic have been around long enough to be relatively bug-free, and the manuals, although perhaps a little on the turgid side, are informative. Oric and Lynx Basic, on the other hand, are only now starting to shape up, as bugs are found and fixed, and the manuals are still being 'updated' through the good offices of various user groups. Fine machines for those who know what they're doing, but a little dispiriting for a beginner who bought one just after they came out.

For games, your requirements are liable to be





- 1 List all the micros you can afford.
- 2 If you have any specific tasks to perform, such as word processing eliminate any micros where this will be impossible/inconvenient.
- 3 Look at the software available for the micros left on the list, and cross off any which are poorly served, or which do not have the software you're liable to need for specialist tasks.
- 4 Look at the peripherals available, and cross off any with problems similar to those under software, above.
- 5 If you've let any micros through on the grounds that software and peripherals are 'coming soon' go back to 3 and 4 and cross them off.
- 6 Ask yourself if there's anything non-standard about the micros still on the list. For example, you need an interface if you want to run any printer but the ZX Printer off the Spectrum, and Commodore machines tend to lock you into Commodore peripherals. Add any extra cost you're liable to incur.
- 7 Now — and only now — look at the specifications of the machines on your shortlist. How many colours do they have? How much memory? What is the screen resolution? Do they have user defined graphics? Do they have sprites?
- 8 Look at the supporting literature.
- 9 If you're still not down to one micro, or if one on your list hasn't turned out to be miles ahead of the others, buy the cheapest.

a little different. The first thing you should look at here, naturally, is the games available for the micros on your shortlist. You might also like to bear in mind that it isn't just a question of what's available — you've also got to think about what is available near where you live, unless you want to trust mail order companies.

There are other things you'll need to consider. Does your choice have a built-in joystick interface, and if not, can you buy one for it? You may want to be able just to plug games in, rather than having to wait for them to load from tape, so you must also ask whether or not your machine will take cartridge software.

Finally, ask yourself how much the games cost for the various machines. You may find yourself buying a machine that costs less initially, but in the long run costs you a lot more because of the price of the software.

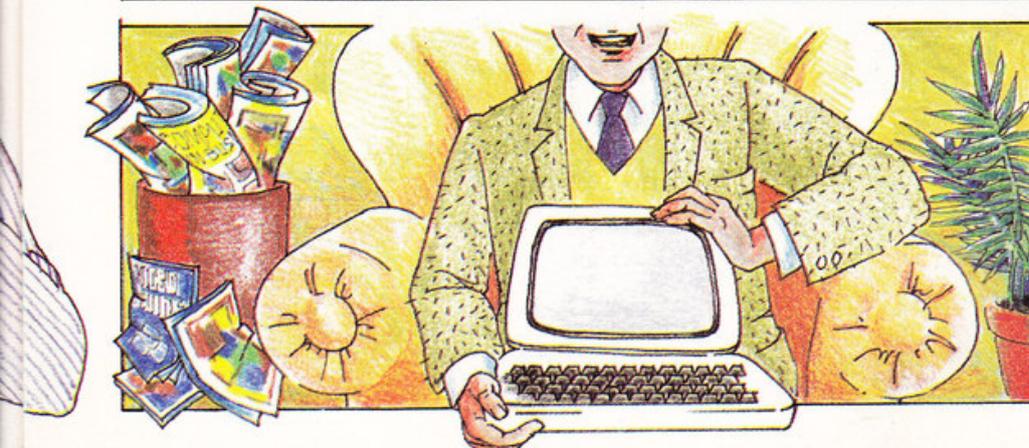
Using a micro for home filing or for work is again a question of software, but you're also likely to want to use a printer, and if the jobs you intend to do are big, then you may well want disk drives.

So first you should check to see what software is available, say in fields such as home accounts, word processing and filing. You should also check out a few reviews of these packages, because there's little point in buying a micro that only has third rate and/or inconvenient-to-use serious software supporting it.

For large files, disks will be a must, as slowly and laboriously saving information on tape will take up too much time, and may limit the size and versatility of your files. So make sure your choice of micro can be connected up to a disk system, and also to a printer, if you're going to want written output.

If you're going to spend a lot of time writing on your micro, you'll want a proper typewriter style keyboard. You may find yourself thinking that you could make do with one of the cheaper variants, such as the Oric, but resist this temptation. Keyboards do come in all shapes and sizes, but you can really only do professional word processing tasks on full sizes, full-travel keyboards.

And if you're still confused? Don't despair: as we said at the outset, micros today are incredibly cheap, and really the best way to learn about them is to get on. So, if you can't make up your mind, don't buy an expensive system — buy a cheaper, tried and tested one. Sure, in a year's time you'll probably be thinking of upgrading, but once you've been bitten by the bug, that goes for all of us...



Micropaedia Editor: Geof Wheelwright
Contributors: Igor Thomas, John Lettice
Design: Nigel Wingrove

NEXT WEEK

Next week we continue our series of buyer's guides with a look at peripherals — printers, plotters, disk drives, monitors. Don't miss it.

HARDWARE BUYER'S GUIDE

Over the next 13 pages we'll give you not one, but two complete home micro buyer's guides. Each on its own would be valuable in helping you choose a micro for Christmas, but taken together they are an unparalleled complementary package for the discerning micro buyer.

The first eight pages of this guide consist of details of 17 home micros under £400 and four notable business micros over £900 — comparing similarly-priced machines and giving thumbnail sketches of what software and hardware is available for each machine.

The last six pages is our Databasics section, normally published at the back of the magazine. To make it easy to use with this special Micropaedia buyer's guide, we have put the two together as one quick reference package.

In the comparison charts the machines are compared for price, standard RAM offering, maximum RAM, and the maximum text and graphic resolutions.



Name ZX81

Price £45 (new ZX-81 starter pack)

Standard memory 16K with expansion pack included in starter pack.

Comments The original black-and-white soundless 'starter computer' from Sinclair costs £45. With the vast library of software established for the machine over the past few years, it's probably the best black and white first computer you can get. It's also one of the few black and white computers that has survived.

Interfaces Cassette, TV and expansion port. The ZX81 is by nature a simple beast, but so many people have felt challenged by its simplicity that a vast range of

peripheral devices from 80-column printer interfaces to disk drive connectors have been developed for it by third party hardware manufacturers.

Software Given the machine's limited memory and graphics — and its lack of sound — some quite stunning packages have been produced for it, most of them games. But with the machine's flat keyboard it's perhaps surprising that a number of software houses have produced professional word processors and spreadsheets for it.

Lots of good games for this starter computer and a surprising number of serious computing utilities.



Name Aquarius

Price £59.95

Standard memory 4K expandable to 52K

Comments This micro started life as the Mattel Aquarius, but has been taken over by the machine's manufacturers Radifon Electronics. However, the market pressures that caused the switch to direct sales by Radifon also forced Mattel to drop the machine's price to £59.95 just before it

made that switch. The new price makes the Aquarius one of the cheapest colour computers, although Radifon has indicated they will push the price back up after Christmas.

Interfaces The Aquarius currently offers expansion to run an own-brand cassette recorder, a small thermal printer, games paddles and cartridge games. The mini-expander unit also allows memory upgrade, initially with 16K memory pack.

The machine uses a Spectrum-style rubber keyboard and allows for overlays that help to assign specific tasks to different keys in both games and applications packages.

Software This has, until recently, been almost exclusively in the cartridge format. Radifon has promised, however, to have 50 cassette programs on the shelves by Christmas — releasing them at the rate of three a week.

Machine	Price	Standard RAM	Max RAM	Text	Graphics
ZX81	£45	1K	16K	32×24	64×42
Aquarius	£60	4K	52K	40×24	80×72
Laser 200	£70	4K	64K	32×16	128×64
Oric 1	£99	16K	48K	40×28	240×200
Spectrum	£99	16K	48K	32×24	256×192

Name Laser 200

Price £69.95

Standard memory 4K (immediately expandable to 20K, with the promise of future expansion to 64K)

Comments Until the Aquarius price drop, this machine wore the mantle of the cheapest colour computer in the UK. It is billed as a competitor to Sinclair's Spectrum colour computer and has a good deal in common with that machine: the same type of rubber keyboard, single-key Basic keyword entry and the same Z80 processor.

Interfaces The Laser offers the standard TV output, cassette I/O plug-ins, a memory

expansion and the traditional cartridge expansion slot. The 16K RAM expansion — which brings the price of a 20K Laser up to the price of Sinclair's Spectrum (£99) — slots into the said memory expansion slot at the back of the machine.

Promised for the future are printer, joystick and disk drive interfaces.

Software This is perhaps the biggest question-mark surrounding the Laser. Although the machine sports a standard Microsoft Basic, it's early days yet to predict how much software will be written for it. Abbex software has committed itself to producing some packages, but it's a 'wait and see' situation.



Name Sinclair ZX Spectrum

Price £99 (for basic 16K model), £125 (for 48K model)

Standard memory 16K or 48K

Comments The best-selling colour computer in the UK, with arguably both the biggest third-party peripherals and software base of any machine bar the Apple II.

Although some may gripe about the Spectrum's 'spongy keys', they have kept the price of this machine consistently low. And enough third-party peripheral houses have made their own 'real' keyboard available to mean that this is no longer a major issue.

Interfaces Printers, disk drives, (Micro-drives), joysticks, cartridge software, networking, memory expansion: you name it, it seems it can be plugged into the Spectrum. Sinclair itself offers the Microdrive, a cartridge software and joystick interface, an RS-232C, Microdrive and network interface and the ZX printer (which can also be used with the ZX81). But that's only a fraction of what's available from third-party peripheral developers.

Software Again, there are reams of it, including a lot of very good games.



Name Oric-1

Price £99 (£79.95 mail-order from Oric)

Standard memory 16K expandable to 48K

Comments There are actually two models of Oric, the 16K and the 48K, but for the purposes of this buyers guide they are more or less the same machine. After a difficult first year when the Oric was greeted with mixed reactions, and the company had considerable problems with

its ROM, Oric has achieved considerable success in France and a good software base has developed for the machine here.

Interfaces It has a keyboard somewhat superior to its major competitor — Sinclair's Spectrum — and supports more standard interfaces, including a built-in parallel interface (to use standard 80-column dot-matrix printers) and Oric's own colour printer/plotter, a plug-in for RGB professional colour monitors and an

expansion 'bus' that will soon take promised three inch disk drives.

Oric has also promised a modem for the machine which will use its built-in Teletext graphics facility to connect to Prestel.

Software Here again, Oric has recently found itself recovering from teething troubles. Word-processing, spreadsheet and machine language software is now available, in addition to a growing collection of both arcade and adventure games.

Name Sord/CGL M-5

Price £150

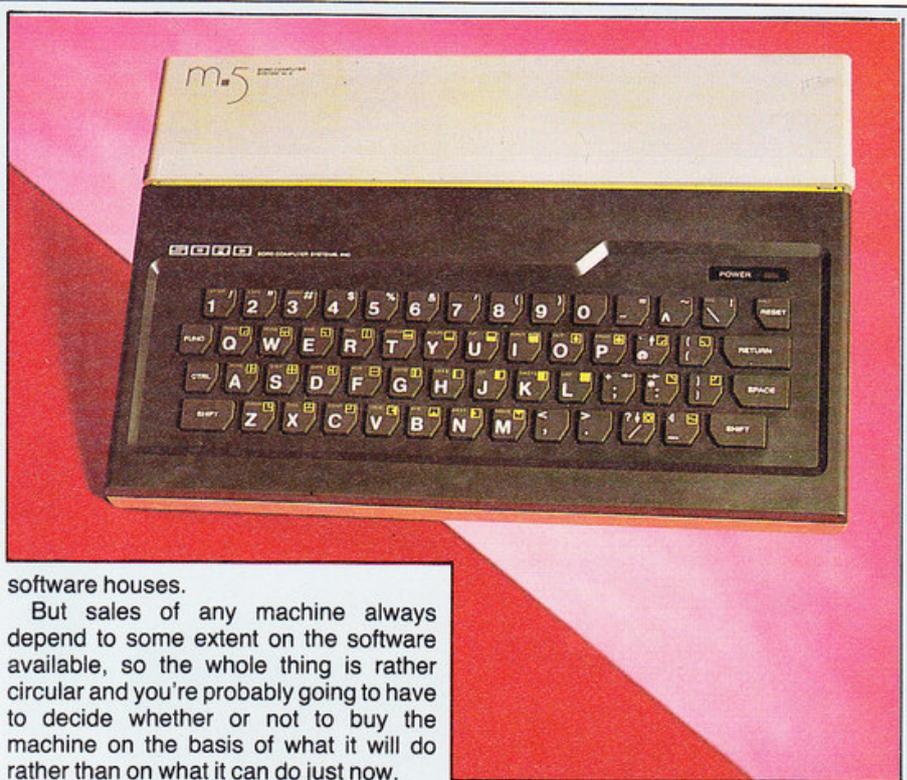
Standard memory 4K available RAM, 16K video memory (expandable to 32K)

Comments Since this machine arrived in the UK last spring, it has consistently been passed off as 'nice, but pricey' by reviewers — but Sord and CGL (Sord's major distributor in the UK) are hoping a drop from £190 to £150 will change all that.

The machine comes with only 4K of memory, but that memory is a good deal more useful than it might appear as the 16K video memory does a lot of work with the screen.

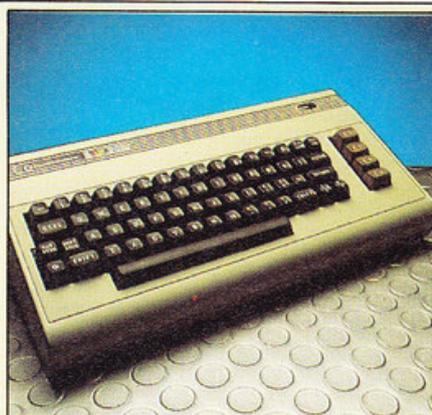
Interfaces The Sord comes with interfaces for motor-controlled cassette storage, joysticks, cartridge software (plug-in game and business packages) and colour television display. It also includes a plug-in for Centronics full 80-column printers like the Epson MX-80F/T.

Software Software development for such machines as the M-5 is a chicken and egg question. Well-built and high-quality machines like the M-5 always come with some software, but the availability of more depends greatly on whether the machine sells well enough to impress third-party



software houses.

But sales of any machine always depend to some extent on the software available, so the whole thing is rather circular and you're probably going to have to decide whether or not to buy the machine on the basis of what it will do rather than on what it can do just now.



Name Commodore Vic-20

Price £139

Standard memory 5K (expandable to 32K)

Comments This old standard from Commodore rivals the Sinclair machines in popularity and—in its current 'starter pack' form—offers very good value. The starter pack includes the standard 3K RAM Vic-20, the dedicated Vic cassette recorder and a cassette including 20 programs.

Interfaces The standard Vic comes with joystick port, serial port, expansion slot and user port, and TV output modulator (both the picture and sound are output through the TV).

Software The standard Vic-20 comes with a cassette containing 20 programs including 'Type-a-tune', 'Blitz' and 'Hopit', but that's only the briefest hint of the vast array of software that's been built up for this machine. Software on both cartridge and cassettes is available from Commodore and many other third party software houses.

Name Tandy MC-10

Price £99.00

Standard memory 4K (expandable to 20K)

Comments The MC-10 is Tandy's first entry in the under £100 computer sweepstakes and provides a low-cost counterpart to the company's more upmarket Colour Computer. The machine is small—not much larger than the ZX-81—but supports hard-plastic keys, a printer interface and an RS-232C communications port.

The machine also allows single-key Basic keyword entry and a modified version of Microsoft Basic called Micro Colour Basic.

Interfaces Tandy offers a small thermal printer with the MC-10, as well as its range of peripherals such as computer cassette recorders, dot matrix printers and plotters. Tandy is also expected to produce a cheap modem that would allow the machine to 'talk' to other computers over the telephone.

Software Given that it uses much the same Basic as the Colour Computer—and that Tandy is certainly capable of putting out lots of its own software—there should soon be a great deal of software available for this machine. But the operative words here are 'should' and 'soon'. Just how true that prediction is depends entirely on Tandy.





Name Atari 600XL
Price £160
Standard memory 16K (expandable to 64K)

Comments The Atari 600XL is not a great deal different from its predecessors, the Atari 400 and Atari 800. Like the 400, the 600XL has 16K memory as standard kit—but unlike the 400, the price also includes a full travel keyboard, the Basic programming language built into the main board of the machine and expandability to 64K.

At £160, it represents very good value—particularly since it can run the whole range of existing Atari disk, cartridge and cassette software.

Interfaces The 600XL uses Atari's non-standard peripherals interface for disk

drives, cassette recorders and printers. Using Atari's standard peripheral expansion interface, you can also hook up standard parallel printers in addition to the new range of Atari dot matrix and letter quality printers. There's also a parallel bus and even a planned Expander box that give you dual RS-232C connectors, a Centronics port and eight other expansion slots.

Software There's loads of it—although a surprising amount is still only available in the more expensive cartridge form. But a large range of applications are represented in the Atari software list, including an official implementation of Visicalc and a quite respectable cartridge word-processor called Atariwriter.

Name Colour Genie
Price £168
Standard memory 16K RAM (expandable to 32K)

Comments Also known as the EACA EG2000, the Colour Genie is distributed by Lowe of Matlock, which offers full support and service. One of the earlier contenders in the USA home micro marketplace, the Colour Genie is generally comparable to both the Vic and TRS-80/1 moulds.

Interfaces Like other (more expensive) members of the Genie family, a healthy selection of plugs and sockets ensures that most kinds of add-on can be tailored for the Colour Genie. Serial, parallel, audio, video, cassette, television, and expansion connectors, as well as an internal speaker, are standard fixtures and fittings.

Software Supplied with the machine is a demo cassette, containing programs written in Basic. Unless you have some add-ons, you are pretty much limited to using the built-in (Microsoft-styled) ROM Basic language. The semi-high resolution graphics are great for games, but the text display is somewhat resistant to more serious applications.



Name Dragon 32
Price £175
Standard memory 32K
Comments The Dragon 32 has a common

heritage with the Tandy Colour Computer, but has traditionally maintained a lower price than its chief (but much larger) rival. Most colour computer software will run on the Dragon, and in the year or so that it's been available the Dragon has built up a good software base of its own—mostly from third-party software houses. Dragon have also been no slouches in producing their own peripherals, releasing both joysticks and a disk drive.

Interfaces The Dragon comes with a standard parallel printer interface, plugs for joysticks, a composite video monitor socket, a cassette interface and its own

expansion port. Dragon's recently released disk drive unit and disk controller round out the expansion options—with the disk controller containing an upgraded version of Microsoft Basic.

Software The Dragon's compatibility with the Tandy colour computer gave it a software advantage to start with, and with the large numbers of Dragon programs written and released in the past year, the machine is one of the better-equipped popular micros. In addition to a plethora of games, a number of both word-processing and spreadsheet programs have been developed for the machine.

Machine	Price	Standard RAM	Max RAM	Text	Graphics
Tandy MC10	£99	4K	20K	40×24	64×32
Vic 20	£139	3.5K	32K	22×23	160×176
Sord	£150	4K	32K	40×24	256×192
Atari 600XL	£160	16K	64K	40×24	320×192
Colour Genie	£168	16K	32K	40×24	160×102
Dragon 32	£175	32K	32K	32×16	256×192

HARDWARE BUYER'S GUIDE

Name Tandy Colour Computer

Price £179

Standard memory 16K (expandable to 32K)

Comments The Tandy Colour Computer was Tandy's first entry into the low-cost home colour computer market, and as it has been around for some time has developed a good software base and a wide range of peripherals. So far, the colour computer wins out in its contest with the Dragon on the basis of having more peripherals, software and a larger dealer network — but the Dragon still scores over the Tandy by having a better keyboard and more memory.

Interfaces Much the same as the Dragon, except that all Tandy peripherals will — of course — work without modification on the colour computer. And the Tandy-Dragon connection can sometimes work in Tandy's favour as many third-party peripherals for the Dragon will run without modification.

Software Cartridge software has always been the colour computer's forte, but with the recent rash of cassette programs for the Dragon that could change feature. Although these machines are in competition, Dragon, Tandy and the users of both machines will benefit from more sales of either machine.



Name Lynx

Price £225

Standard memory 48K RAM (expandable to 192K)

Comments The Lynx is perhaps less well-known than other micros produced in Cambridge, however it boasts many of the features found in machines costing 50% to 75% more. Including a 'real' keyboard, colour graphics, and loudspeaker, the design of the Lynx micro is of the lightweight desktop variety.

Interfaces As with many Z80 based micros, a comprehensive expansion connector allows you to bolt-on peripherals. This is where additional ROM and RAM get grafted on, as well as floppy disk equipment. As supplied, Lynx sports television, cassette, video, RGB, light pen, and serial interface connectors.

Software The Lynx contains ROM Basic as standard, although ROM Pascal, Forth and Comal languages are offered. With optional floppy disks fitted, the plethora of CP/M software is available.



Name Electron

Price £199

Standard memory 32K RAM

Comments This machine is the much-heralded offspring of the BBC Micro. As such, its principal features are a real keyboard, the BBC Basic language, and almost complete compatibility with existing BBC software. Due to great advance demand, it is presently difficult to find an Electron in stock, so you'd be well advised to check availability before setting your sights on this one for Christmas.

Interfaces To compete in the under £200 marketplace, the Electron contains only the barest minimum of built-in interfaces. Apart from cassette, television, video, and RGB connectors, all other peripherals (will) use the large expansion connector. Unfortunately, being yet another very young machine, not even a handful of Electron interfaces can presently be found off the shelf. However, there's a growing range of mail-order bolt-ons.

Software The shortage of interfaces means you are restricted in the usefulness of any of the existing BBC software which will run on an Electron. Also, until you can connect a printer, writing your own programs will be somewhat tedious. Content yourself with a few games for Christmas, however, then get serious in the New Year.



Name Sharp MZ700

Price £275

Standard memory 64K RAM

Comments Another young machine, the MZ700 offers complete compatibility with its predecessors, the Sharp MZ80 series. As such, the considerable number of school and business MZ80 users will find everything they know, plus more, within this latest machine from Sharp. With its lithe and stylish keyboard, the MZ700 approaches the realm of professional micros, although it is not very well known yet.

Interfaces The most prominent feature of the MZ700 is its ability to hold both its optional cassette recorder and colour printer/plotter within its cabinet. Included

in the standard machine are both a real keyboard and internal loudspeaker. Standard connectors include cassette, printer, television, video monitor, RGB monitor, joysticks, and I/O.

Software Apart from the Sharp Basic language, a word processor and a few games, there are few MZ700-specific programs available. However, the standard 64K Z80A design and wide range of MZ80 software should be enough.



Name Commodore 64

Price £229

Standard memory 64K RAM

Comments The youngest member of the well-known Commodore family (remember the PET?) offers one of the better values for money in Santa's sackful. As well as a real keyboard, you get powerful colour graphics, sound generator, lots of RAM memory, ROM Basic, and a reliable expansion system.

Interfaces Like the Commodore Vic 20, the 64 offers serial (RS232), parallel, cassette (Commodore standard), joystick, and television (picture and sound) connectors. A cartridge/expansion connector allows games and peripherals to be fitted quickly and easily, notably Z80 processor, floppy disk, and 80-column screen expansions.

Software There's now much software to choose from for the 64 with word processors, databases, and some excellent games. Watch out for a software explosion with the announcement of the CP/M operating system interface for the 64, and if you can afford the prices, American import packages are exceptional.



Name BBC Model B

Price £399

Standard memory 32K RAM

Comments Here is the most expensive machine in our list, although by no means the most expensive home micro on the market! There is presently nothing to beat it at this price for versatility. Its very name reinforces its pedigree, as well as assuring additional acceptance by both education and business users. Also, the BBC Basic language is very likely to become a world-wide standard, if it isn't already.

Interfaces There are many products available, and countless more in the pipeline. The standard Model B has a full real keyboard, ROM Basic, colour graphics, and sound generator with built-in loudspeaker. Standard connectors

include cassette, printer, television, video monitor, RGB monitor, and analog (includes voltage-measuring, light pen, and joysticks). Also provided, but requiring extra components to be fitted, are speech, network, floppy disk, and second-processor connectors.

Software Quite a lot of it and largely of very high quality. There's a wide choice for games players and, thanks to the machine's educational pedigree, a lot of packages in that area too. The majority of what's available comes on cassette although there are many utilities and business applications on plug-in ROMs. Surprisingly little disk software so far. Serious programmers are very well catered for with a number of language implementations.

Machine	Price	Standard RAM	Max RAM	Text	Graphics
Tandy Color	£179	16K	32K	32×16	256×192
Electron	£199	32K	32K	80×32	640×256
Lynx	£275	48K	192K	40×24	256×248
Commodore 64	£229	64K	64K	40×24	320×200
BBC Micro	£399	32K	32K	80×32	640×256

HARDWARE BUYER'S GUIDE



Name Apricot

Price £1,890

Standard memory 256K RAM

Comments The newest addition to the blossoming tribe of true 16-bit micros, and portable as well. Only a very old-fashioned businessperson would not develop technological twinkles in the eyes at finding this marvel under the Christmas tree.

Interfaces In step with most business micros, the Apricot has most of the fundamentals included, such as video monitor and disk drives. Connectors provided are minimal but essential: Centronics parallel and RS232 D-type serial. Expansion is obtained through (only) two internal connectors, which may be used to implement the imminent new products.

Software Where the Apricot has staked much of its faith is in its built-in 3.5 inch microfloppy disk drives from Sony. Although the machine supports CP/M-86, MS-DOS, and Concurrent CP/M-86, it may be slightly difficult to keep it fed with new disks for a while.



Name Apple IIe (Europlus)

Price £972

Standard memory 64K RAM (expandable)

Comments Not to be confused with its (now retired) predecessor the Apple II, the IIe is the current version of 'The thing that started it all'.

Interfaces If it moves, it can be interfaced to an Apple. Although the basic machine carries only cassette, video, and games connectors, there is a plethora of interface cards which can be slotted into the internal expansion connectors. This is where the cost starts to mount, as a quick total of essential business add-ons will show. Some dealers may still sell older Apple cards which will not work in the current model, but the bulk of standard cards (printer interfaces, expansion RAM, floppy disk, winchester disk) will work without alteration.

Software It's doubtful if anyone actually knows how much there is. Languages, business, education, games. Should any of you feel slightly wary of having to actually write your own programs, no other micro can offer as wide a catalogue of existing software as Apple.

Name IBM PC-1

Price £2,392

Standard memory 64K RAM (expandable to 576K)

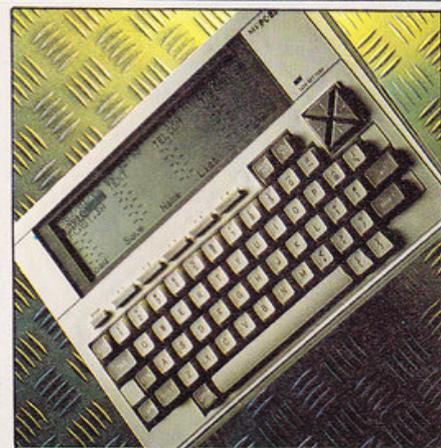
Comments At last we settle down to our well-earned Christmas rest with the famous IBM PC micro. Actually, the PC is currently available in two versions (three in the New Year), so here we describe the lowest-price model, the PC-1. The entire concept of using micros in business took a big jump when IBM revealed its idea of how to do it. A detached keyboard, a separate cabinet and a standard cabinet and a standard video monitor. All with the unmistakable air of legitimacy which only IBM can exude. Not the cheapest, not the fastest, but what better insurance can you get against micro obsolescence than those three little letters?

Interfaces The basic philosophy of the IBM PC is very simple: nothing more than you need. Standard facilities include serial and parallel interfaces and the requisite video monitor output, but like the Apple anything else is extra. The five internal expansion connectors have spawned a truly awesome range of



products, with RAM expansions, high-resolution RGB interfaces, second processors, video digitisers, speech recognition devices, fibre optic systems, and many more.

Software Even IBM is a relative newcomer to the micro marketplace, but the amount of software currently available for the PC is more than some other machines will ever see in their lifetimes. Most software for the PC is designed to run under MS-DOS or CP/M-86, the two most popular 16-bit operating systems. Why not come in from the snow, and gather round the nice warm glow of the mighty IBM software furnace.



Name NEC PC-8201A

Price £475

Standard memory 16K RAM (expandable to 128K)

Comments Perhaps unfairly, at the bottom of our business person's Christmas shopping list is a true battery-operated professional micro. The eagle-eyed shopper will notice more than a slight physical similarity to the Tandy Model 100, although the NEC is designed differently, has twice as much RAM and actually costs £24 less.

Interfaces With its own built-in 40-column screen display and plug-in RAM storage cartridges, the NEC doesn't really need (hence doesn't offer) either video display or disk drive facilities. The main machine memory can be expanded four-fold, although there is no limit to the number of slot-in 32K CMOS RAM storage cartridges which you may use to save your inscrutable data. Provision is made for either serial or parallel printers, a bar-code reader device, and RS232 gadgets (such as modems).

Software The NEC is supplied with both Microsoft Basic and a word processor as built-in ROMs, and additional Basic programs on standard cassette tape. The latter include a name & address book, an investment portfolio calculator, and of course some entertainment generators (games).

DATA BASES

This six-page guide lists as many of the micros on the market for under £12,000 as possible. In Databases you'll find all the specifications for the machines, add-ons and software necessary to make your buying decisions. PCN keeps you up to date in three-week cycles, starting with hardware, then peripherals and finally software.

PRICE Specifications listed for each machine indicate what you get for the basic price quoted, which includes VAT.

PROCESSOR TYPE A microprocessor is the heart of the computer. The Z80 and 6502 are popular 8-bit chips. The 8088 and 68000 are common 16-bit chips. If a machine has an 8-bit and a 16-bit processor we have listed the 16-bit only. Cust. means custom-built.

SPEED IN MHz Speed of the clock used to drive the microprocessor, measured in MegaHertz (million cycles per second).

STANDARD RAM Amount of main memory used on the system. The capacity is expressed in kilobytes.

MAX RAM normally at extra cost Amount of memory to which the system can be expanded.

MAX CHARACTERS columns x lines The number of characters that can be displayed across the screen and the number of lines down.

METHOD (at extra cost) This indicates the way the computer displays information. **M** on its own means that a monitor is included in the basic price. **Tv** indicates that you can plug the computer into a television set (**M++**) indicates that the monitor costs extra. **LCD** = Liquid crystal display. **COLOUR CAPABILITY** tells you whether the machine can give colour at the basic price quoted.

MAX DOT RESOLUTION gives the maximum number of points across the screen by the number of points down the screen that are available for graphics.

KEYBOARD This tells you the type of keyboard that comes with the machine. **W** = word processing, **C** = calculator and **T** = touch-sensitive. **NO OF FUNCTION KEYS** refers to the number of keys that can be used for different jobs by different programs.

NUMERIC PAD indicates whether the machine has a separate calculator-style group of number keys to enter data quickly.

INTERFACES BUILT-IN shows the number of standard connections built into the machine.

CASSETTE FACILITY gives a yes or no as to whether or not the machine can use a cassette to store data.

CAPACITY PER DISK AND DISK SIZE tells you how many disk drives come with the machine, and the amount of data in kilobytes (K) or megabytes (Mb) that can be stored on each drive. There are two sizes for disks, 5.1/4" or 8", and they can be floppy (F) or hard (H). **OPERATING SYSTEM** gives the program that looks after the general running of a computer.

LANGUAGES INC is a column which lists the programming languages that come with the machine at the basic price.

OTHER LANGUAGES AVAILABLE indicates whether or not other programming languages are available for the machine.

DISTRIBUTOR To find which company distributes the machine refer to the distributor table from the code listed in this column. The table is at the end of the listings, and gives the distributor's name and telephone number.

All details given are the latest available. We ask distributors to let us know as soon as machine specifications change so Databases can be kept right up to date. This guide has been meticulously researched and the information collected from individual distributors listed.

PRICE GUIDE

Sinclair ZX81	£40	Powertran Cortex	£454	Osborne I	£1,581	Country Computers C3000	£2,242	Britannia Baby	£2,657	Cifer Series 1	£3,214	Altos 800/15	£5,663
Casio FB100	£50	Epson HX20	£472	Signal 10025	£1,599	Kemtron K2000E	£2,242	Adler Alphatronic P3	£2,696	Samurai	£3,214	Durango F85	£5,744
TRS-80 PC4	£50	Tandy TRS 80 Model 100	£499	APL Signet	£1,610	Rair Black Box 320S	£2,242	Corona PC1	£2,702	Tiger	£3,214	Triton 4	£5,744
Aquarius	£50	Nascom 3	£549	Basis 108	£1,683	Sanyo MBC 2000	£2,242	Eagle II	£2,702	Torch	£3,214	Marm Chip M9900	£5,750
Laser 200	£70	Commodore 4016	£652	Commodore Spr. Pet 9000	£1,719	Toshiba T-200	£2,242	Almarc 801	£2,714	Sord M223	£3,306	SWT Tech. Products S09	£5,805
Sharp PC1251	£80	Research Machine 480Z	£684	Gemini Galaxy 2	£1,719	TMK 332	£2,242	DEC Rainbow 100	£2,754	Kontroll RS180	£3,340	BAASF 7100	£5,837
Jupiter Ace	£90	DAIPC	£776	ACT Apricot	£1,840	Merlin M2215	£2,294	ICL PC Model 10	£2,754	Kaypro 10	£3,392	CompuStar	£5,842
Casio FX702P	£90	Apple II	£799	Microsolution Brit. Genius	£1,850	Bonsai SM 3000	£2,294	Millbank SX10	£2,754	Columbia PC 1600-1	£3,392	Sord M243	£5,862
Sinclair Spectrum	£99	Tandy Model 4	£861	Globe 101	£1,850	North Star Horizon	£2,294	Sirius I	£2,754	OEM Orion	£3,392	Sage IV	£6,037
Tandy TRS-80 Pocket 2	£130	HP 75C	£883	Grundy 8200	£1,897	Sanyo MBC 1250	£2,294	Victor 9000	£2,754	Barcellos AMT 100	£3,392	Rair Business Computer	£6,210
Commodore VIC 20	£140	Sharp MZ80B	£900	Genie III	£1,900	Casu Mini C2	£2,300	North Star Advantage	£2,754	Barcellos AMT 105	£3,450	Digital Microsystems 4	£6,210
Atari 400	£149	Franklin Ace	£914	Toshiba T-100	£1,932	Seed System I	£2,300	Apple III	£2,780	Kalamazoo 1050	£3,450	Superstar	£6,296
Sord M5	£150	Apple IIe	£972	Kaypro II	£1,949	Sharp PC3201	£2,300	North Star Advantage	£2,817	Digital Microsystems 3	£3,576	Racal 6000	£6,327
Atari 600XL	£160	Mupid 320 GB	£978	Krypton 800 range	£1,953	HP 85	£2,360	Apple III	£2,817	Televideo TS 1602-C	£3,714	Eagle 1600	£6,497
Colour Genie	£168	Husky Hunter	£997	Kenilworth 83G	£1,983	HP Series 100, 120	£2,360	Sanyo MBC 4050	£2,862	Adds Multivision	£3,795	TI System 200-250	£6,695
Sharp PC1500	£169	Commodore 8032	£1,129	Transam Truscan	£1,983	Sord M23P	£2,369	Bonsai SM 4000	£2,862	Planon Pronto	£3,795	CompuCorp 675	£6,780
Dragon 32	£174	Commodore 710	£1,144	NCR Decision Mate V	£1,995	IBM PC	£2,386	Logic VTS Vitesse	£2,869	Panasonic JD800M	£3,795	Wicat 150	£6,846
Texas CC40	£180	Microdecision	£1,150	EDS Datamachine	£1,995	TI Prof. Computer	£2,386	Decision-1 Computer O11	£2,875	Panasonic K3000	£3,795	Sundance I	£6,969
Tandy TRS 80 colour	£180	Tulp 1	£1,150	IPDS QX10	£1,995	Xerox 820 Model III	£2,392	DMS Fox	£2,950	DEC PC 350	£3,795	Pascal Mod. Microengine	£7,003
Mattel Intellivision	£199	Fujitsu FM8	£1,226	Tandy TRS-80 Model II	£2,012	Haywood 3000	£2,415	Eagle III	£2,950	Vector 4	£3,852	Diablo 3000	£7,250
Electron	£225	Sanyo MBC 1000	£1,259	Kenilworth 83N	£2,019	LSM4	£2,439	Xenith ZF-120-22	£2,978	Cifer Club	£3,904	Onyx 5001 MU	£7,607
Camputers Lynx	£229	Pied Piper	£1,299	Minstrel	£2,059	Canon CX-1	£2,472	Philips P3500	£3,000	Sage II	£4,019	Apple Lisa	£7,653
Commodore 64	£250	Tandy TRS-80 Model III	£1,374	Portico Miracle Portable	£2,064	IO Tech Iona	£2,500	Monroe EC 8800	£3,000	Tandy TRS-80 Model 16	£4,199	Sundance II	£8,205
Sharp MZ700	£250	Commodore C10	£1,374	LSIM3	£2,064	HP 87XM	£2,525	Philips P3000	£3,000	IBM PCXT	£4,258	Haywood-Hinet	£9,550
Atari 800XL	£269	Commodore 8096	£1,437	Haywood 9000 Composite	£2,064	Quantum 2000	£2,525	Tanberg EC-10	£3,000	Country Computers C1000	£4,310	Altos 856-10	£10,350
New Brain A	£299	NEC PC 8001	£1,457	Position 9000	£2,134	Ajile	£2,539	Archives 1	£3,003	Televideo TS-80ZH	£4,360	Micro Five 3000	£10,480
Genie II	£300	Pasca 640	£1,437	Research Machines 980Z	£2,147	Equator	£2,587	Cromemco System 1	£3,025	Country Computers C1000	£4,542	Sundance 16	£11,442
Atari 800	£300	NEC PC 8000	£1,454	Superbrain JR	£2,156	Caron AS 100	£2,599	Wang Professional	£3,080	Convus Concept	£4,542	Micro Five 3000	£10,480
Nascom 2	£327	NEC PC 8000	£1,483	Future Computers FX-20	£2,156	CP1100	£2,639	DECPC 325	£3,080	Micro Five 1000	£4,542	Micro Five 3000	£10,480
Microtran 65	£389	Signal 2	£1,489	C/WP Cortex	£2,180	Enterprise 1000	£2,639	Direct 1000	£3,099	Fortune 32:16 System 2	£5,204	Micro Five 3000	£10,480
BBC Model B	£399	Magnum	£1,495	Comart Communicator	£2,180	Fact 6520	£2,645	Equator	£3,099	Zeus 4	£5,400	Micro Five 3000	£10,480
Sharp MZ80A	£399	Televideo TS-800 Series	£1,495	Adler Alphatronic P2	£2,197	Olympia Boss Model A	£2,645	Hyperion	£3,100	Molecular M200	£5,462	Micro Five 3000	£10,480
Datasc Micro Controller	£431	HP 86A	£1,570					Clivio Table - Tops 925	£3,105				

ABBREVIATIONS

Am: Amal
Fr: Forth
As: Assembly
Ba: Basic
Co: Cobol

HARDWARE

Make and model	Price inc VAT	Processor type	Speed in Mhz	Standard RAM	Max RAM - normally at extra cost	Display		Graphics resolution	Keyboard		Interfaces built-in				Storage Capacity per disk and disk size	Operating system	Languages inc	Other languages available	Distributor	Comments
						Max characters columns x lines	Method (at extra cost)		Colour capability	Type of keyboard	No. of function keys	Numeric pad	No. of RS232	No. of Centronics						
ACT Apricot	£1,719	8086A	5	256K	768K	80x25	LCD	800x400	W	8	1	1	2	2x315K5 1/4F	MSDOS	Ba		A7	PCN issue 37	
Adds Multivision	£3,795	8085A	5	64K	256K	80x25	M	640x240	W	28	1	1	1	1x350K5 1/4F	CP/M2.2, Muon	Ba		A2	Multi user system	
Adler Alphatronic P2	£2,197	8085A	3	48K	64K	80x24	M		W	6	2	1	3	2x320K5 1/4F	CP/M	Ba		T1	£327 buys extra storage	
Adler Alphatronic P3	£2,696	8085A	3	64K		80x24	M		W	6	2	1	3	2x790K5 1/4F	CP/M	BaAs		T1	16 bit option-promised	
Ajille	£2,599	8088	4	256K		80x25	M	640x250	W	10	1	1	2	2x320K5 1/4F	MS-DOS	BaAs		A9	PCN issue 13	
Almarc 801	£2,708	Z80	4	64K	512K	80x25	(M+)		W		2		11	2x800K5 1/4F	CP/M			A4	8-bit range goes to 20Mb	
Almarc 1601	£3,445	8086	8	128K	1Mb	80x25	(M+)		W		2		11	2x800K5 1/4F	CP/M86	Ba		A4	Pseudo 16-bits go to 20Mb	
Aquarius	£68	Z80A	4	4K	52K	80x24	TV	320x192	C				1		Cassette			M7	PCN issue 7	
Altos 800/15	£5,663	Z80	4	192K	208K	80x24	M		W	8	1			1x450K5 1/4F	MP/M			L1	Multi user business machine	
APL Signet	£1,610	Z80A	4	64K		80x25	Tv(M+)				2				APL, CP/M	Ap		M1	*APL terminal recommended	
Apple II	£776	6502	1	48K	128K	40x24	Tv(M+)	256x192	W				8	2x188K5 1/4F	CP/M, DOS 3.3, UCSD-P	Ba		A8	Plenty of software and extras	
Apple IIe	£972	6502	1	64K	128K	80x24	(M+)	256x192	W			1	8		DOS	Ba		A8	Updated Apple II	
Apple III	£2,780	6502	2	128K	256K	80x24	(M+)	560x360	W		1	4		1x140K5 1/4F	SOS, DOS			A8	Will emulate Apple II	
Apple Lisa	£9,775	68000	8	1Mb		120x30	M	792x360	W		2	1	3	2x860K5 1/4F	Lisa			A8	PCN issue 1	
Archives I	£3,003	Z80	4	64K		80x25	M	240x100	W	23	2	1	5	2x386K5 1/4F	CP/M			S1	Standard CP/M + graphics	
Atari 400	£150	6502B	1.79	16K		40x24	Tv	320x192	T	3			7		Cassette	Ba		A5	Games computer	
Atari 800	£300	6502	1.8	48K		40x24	Tv(M+)	320x192	W	3			7		Cassette	Ba		A5	Versatile, good graphics	
Atari 600XL	£160	6502C	1.79	16K	64K	40x24	(M+)	320x192	W	5			4	1x127K5 1/4F	DOS 2	Ba		A5	Dos 3 available 1984	
Atari 800XL	£2,450	6502C	1.79	64K		40x24	(M+)	320x192	W	5			4	1x127K5 1/4F	DOS 2	Ba		A5	256 colours, 128 at any one time	
Barcellos AMT 100	£3,450	Z80A	4	64K	256K	80x24	TvM		W	8	1	1	2	2x500K8F	CP/M	BaCo		B1	Up to four users	
BASF 7100	£5,805	Z80A	4	64K		80x24	M		W	26	1			3x163K5 1/4F	BOS	Ba		C1	Hard disk promised	
Basis 108	£1,683	6502	1	64K	126K	80x24	TvM	820x168	W	15	1	1	6		MOS	BaAs		C12	Apple bus, Z80, 80 columns	
BBC Micro Model B	£399	6502	2	32K		80x30	Tv(M+)	640x256	W	10	1	5	3	2x340K5 1/4F	CP/M	Ba		A1	PCN issue 3	
BMC OKI if 800, Model 20	£4,360	Z80B	5	64K	256K	80x25	M	640x200	W	15	1				CP/M			E1	Built-in printer	
Bonsai SM 3000	£2,294	Z80	2	64K		80x24	M	80x24	W	14	1	1			CP/M, MP/M, MS-DOS			B2	CP/M business machine	
Bonsai SM 4000	£2,842	8088	5	128K	256K	80x24	M		W	14	1	1			CP/M	AsBaCo		B2	Z80 for 8 bit software	
Britannia Baby	£2,657	8085	6.14	64K		80x25	Tv(M+)	80x25	W	11	2	1		2x500K5 1/4F	CP/M			B3	Cobol language included	
British Micro Mini 803	£1,490	Z80A	4	64K		80x25	(M+)	512x256	W	17	1	1	1	2x400K5 1/4F	OS/M	Ba		B4	This is CP/M compatible	
CAL PC	£2,294	8088	5	128K	256K	80x25	TvM	256x512	W		2	1	5	2x400K5 1/4F	CP/M	Ba		C3	Also Z80B Processor	
C-Base 64A	£401	6502	1	64K	192K	40x24	Tv(M+)	256x192	W	51			8		CP/M, DOS 3.3, UCSD-P	Ba		W3	Apple II compatible	
Caltext Micro	£2,019	Z80A	4	64K	256K	80x24	TvM		W	36	1	1	3	2x400K5 1/4F	CP/M	Ba		C3	Range of software included	
Computers Lynx	£225	8088	4	48K	192K	80x24	Tv(M+)	248x256	W	12	1	1			CP/M			C5	Also 128K with CP/M	
Canon AS100	£2,633	8088	4	128K	512K	80x25	M	640x400	W	12	1	1	4	2x640K5 1/4F	MCX	BaAs		C4	Choice of CP/M86 or MS-DOS	
Canon CX-1	£2,500	6809	4	128K	256K	80x24	M	80x25	W	15	3	1	2	2x320K5 1/4F	Cassette	Ba		C4	Pascal, Fortran as extras	
Casio FX 702P	£90	Cust.		2K		20x1	LCD		C						Cassette	Ba		C6	Pocket computer	
Casio PB100	£50	Cust.		0.7K	1.7K	60x1	LCD		C				1		Cassette	Ba		C6	Business pocket computer	
Casu Mini C Mark 2	£2,300	Z80A	4	128K			(M+)				4	1	6	2x1Mb8F				C7	*Choose your own terminal	
Cifer Series 1	£3,214	Z80A	4	64K	320K	132x32	TvM		W	40	3	1		2x800K5 1/4F	CP/M			C17	Other models available	
Cifer Club	£3,904	Z80A	4	64K	256K	80x24	M	1024x300 opt	W	20	3	1	1	1x800K 5 1/4F	CP/M, MP/M opt, UNIX opt			C17	Optional 68000 processor	
Clenio Pronto	£3,795	Z80A	4	64K	1Mb		Tv(M+)				2	2	18	2x600K8F	CP/M	Ba		C8	*Choice of terminal	
Clenio Table-Top 925	£3,105	Z80A	4	64K	128K	80x25	M		W	11	2	2		2x600K8F	CP/M			C8	Watch out for the weight	
Columbia PC1600-1	£3,392	8088	4.77	128K	1Mb	80x24	M	640x200	W	10	2	1	8	2x320K5 1/4F	CP/M, MS-DOS	Ba		C8	An IBM lookalike	
Commodore VIC 20	£140	6502	1	5K	32K	22x23	Tv(M+)	176x158	W	8			3	1	Kernal	Ba		C9	Very popular home micro	
Commodore 64	£629	6510	1	64K		40x25	Tv(M+)	320x200	W	8			3		Kernal	Ba		C9	PCN issue 24	
Commodore 4016	£632	6502	1	16K	32K	40x25	TvM		W				1	1	Cassette, PETDOS	Ba		C9	The original PET	
Commodore 700	£1,144	6509	2	128K	896K	80x25	TvM		W	10			1	1	Kernal	Ba		C9	PCN issue 5	

Make and model

Comments

Distributor

Other languages available

Languages inc

Operating system

Storage

Interfaces built-in

Graphics

Keyboard

Display

Max RAM - normally at extra cost

Speed in Mhz

Processor type

Price inc VAT

Model	Price	RAM	Storage	Display	Keyboard	Mouse	Printer	Expansion	OS	Notes	Rating
Commodore 8032	£1,129	6502	1 32K	96K	80x25	TvM			Cassette, PETDOS	The 80-column PET	C9
Commodore Super Pet 9000	£1,719	6502	2 96K	96K	80x25	TvM			Cassette, PETDOS	Top of the range	C9
CompuCorp 675	£6,780	Z80	4 64K	256K	80x20	M			CompuCorp	Unusual O/S	C10
Compart	£5,837	Z80A	4 64K	512K	80x25	M			CP/M	Networking system	I10
Comart Communicator CP100	£2,180	Z80A	4 64K	512K	80x24	M			CP/M	Business CP/M micro	C13
Corvus PC1	£2,697	8088	5 256K	512K	80x24	M			Merlin	Price includes twin disk drive	N1
Corvus Concept	£4,887	80000	8 256K	1Mb	120x60	M			DOS, CP/M	A4 shaped screen	K1
Country Computers C1000	£4,542	6502	1 64K	128K	80x24	M			CP/M	Runs all Apple software	C16
Country Computers C3000	£2,242	Z80A	4 64K	256K	80x24	M			CP/M 86	*Terminal own choice	C16
CP1100	£2,639	8086	6 128K	1Mb	(M+)				CDS, Crom	Choose your own terminal	C13
Cromemco System 1	£3,025	Z80	4 64K		80x24	M			CP/M	Upgrades available	C13
Cromemco C10	£1,350	Z80	4 64K		80x25	M			CP/M	Low cost CP/M machine	C18
C-WP Cortex	£2,179	Z80	2 48K		60x24	Tv(M+)			Cassette	Z80 plus 6502	C20
DAI PC	£684	8080	2 16K		40x24	Tv(M+)				Mainly maths chip	D9
Datac Micro Controller	£431	Z80	2 16K		40x24	Tv(M+)				Option used in labs	D1
DEC Rainbow 100	£2,714	8088	N/A	64K	192K	M			CP/M	Versatile business machine	D2
DEC PC 325	£3,080	PDP11/23	N/A	256K	132x24	M			P/OS	Mini in micro clothing	D2
Decision-1 Computer MDC-011	£2,869	Z80A	4 64K	192K		(M+)			CP/M	*Buy your own terminal	I2
Diablo 3000	£7,250	8085	3 32K	64K	80x24	M			DACL	Unusual O/S	B5
Digico Prince	£3,392	Z80A	4 64K		80x25	M			CP/M	Unusual keyboard	D3
Digital Microsystems DMS-3	£3,576	Z80A	4 64K		(M+)				MP/M	*Choice of terminal	D4
Digital Microsystems DMS-4	£6,210	Z80A	4 128K	1/2Mb		(M+)			CP/M	*Depends on terminal chosen	D4
Direct 1000	£3,093	Z80	4 64K		80x25	M			CP/M	Standard CP/M machine	D5
DMS Fox	£2,875	Z80A	4 64K		80x24	M			CP/M	Portable machine	D4
Dragon 32	£174	6809E	1 32K	64K	32x16	Tv(M+)			Cassette	Tandy colour lookalike	D6
Durango F85	£5,744	8085A	5 64K	196K	80x64	Tv(M+)			Star Basic	Built in printer	C3
Eagle II	£2,702	Z80A	4 64K		80x24	M			CP/M	Upgrades available	M3
Eagle 1600	£6,497	8086	8 128K	512K	80x25	M			MS-DOS, CP/M 86	High speed IBM copy	M3
Electron	£199	6502	2 32K		80x32	Tv(M+)			MOS	Excellent beginners' machine	A1
Enterprise 1000	£2,645		8 64K			M			Enterprise	Micro Nova 16-bit	D7
Epson HX20	£472	6301	1 16K	32K	20x4	LCD			Cassette	Powerful portable	E2
Epson OX10	£1,995	Z80	4 192K	256K	80x25	M			CP/M	Expansion required for Valdocs	E2
Equator	£6,842	Z80A	4 64K	48K	80x24	M			CP/M, MP/M, Turbo DOS	Two bigger models available	E3
Facit 6520	£2,645	Z80	4 64K	128K	80x24	M			CP/M, Fact DOS	Concurrent printing	F1
Fortune 32.16 System 2	£5,204	68000	6 256K	1Mb	80x24	M			Unix	Genuine 16-bit	I3
Franklin Ace 1000	£914	6502	1 64K	128K	40x24	M, Tv			opt CP/M	Apple IIe compatible	C15
Fujitsu FM8	£1,150	6809	1 64K		80x25	(M+)			Flex	Good for business graphics	S2
Future Computers FX-20	£2,156	8088	8 128K	1Mb	80x25	M			CP/M 86, MS-DOS	Business micro, runs CP/M	E1
Genie II	£299	Z80	1.7 16K	48K	64x16	Tv(M+)			New DOS	CP/M costs extra	L2
Genie III	£1,897	Z80A	3.2 64K		80x24	M			Cassette	Home games machine	L2
Colour Genie	£168	Z80	2.2 32K		40x24	Tv(M+)			CP/M	Low cost British system	G1
Gemini Galaxy 2	£1,719	Z80	4 64K	512K	80x25	M			CP/M	Wordstar plus Mail Merge inc.	G4
Globe 101	£1,850	8085	3 64K		80x24	M			CP/M	Software included	C19
Grundy 8200	£1,850	Z80	4 64K	256K	80x24	M			CP/M	Designed for network	H1
Haywood 9000 Composite	£2,064	Z80A	4 64K	192K	80x25	M			HP	Calculator/computer	H2
HP 75C	£883	Cust.	N/A	16K	32x1	(M+)			Cassette	Engineers' machine	H2
HP 85	£2,360	Cust.	N/A	16K	32x20	M			HP	CP/M optional	H2
HP 86A	£1,570	Cust.	N/A	64K	80x24	M			HP DOS	Special technical uses	H2
HP 87XM	£2,571	Cust.	N/A	128K	80x24	M			CP/M	Top end HP business system	H2
HP Series 100, 120	£2,362	Z80A	3.68	64K	80x24	M			HP	Genuine 16-bit	H2
HP Series 200 Model 16A	£3,212	68000	8 128K	750K	80x25	M			CP/M	Waterproof, with metal case	D10
Husky Hunter	£997	NSC800	4 80K	208K	40x8	LCD			MS, DOS, CP/M 86	Same as Ajile	G5
Hyperion	£3,100	8088	4.7 256K		80x25	M			CP/M	Standard CP/M micro	H3
Hytech H4500	£4,310	Z80	4 64K	208K	80x25	M			MS-DOS	Slow but reliable	I9
IBM PC	£2,392	8088	4.7 64K	576K	80x25	(M+)			DOS 2	8087 co-processor possible	I9
IBM PCXT	£4,258	8088	4.77 128K	640K	80x25	(M+)					

Make and model	Price inc VAT	Processor type	Speed in Mhz	Standard RAM	Max RAM - normally at extra cost	Display		Graphics	Keyboard		Interfaces built-in				Storage	Operating system	Languages inc	Other languages available	Distributor	Comments
						Max characters columns x lines	Method (at extra cost)		Colour capability	Max dot resolution	Type of keyboard	No. of function keys	Numeric pad	No. of Centronics						

HARDWARE

ICL PC Model 15	£2,702	8085A	5	64K	512K	80x25	M			W	8				1x13.3Mb5¼H	CP/M, MPM	Ba	●	I4	Suitable for small business
IDS Datamachine	£1,995	Z80	4	64K	1Mb		Tv(M+)				2				2x400K5¼F	CP/M	Ba	●	I8	*Depends on terminal
IO Tech Iona	£2,539	Z80	4	69K	960K	80x24	M	●	160x75	W	12	1			2x400K5¼F	CP/M	Ba	●	I5	Good colour versatility
Intellivision + micro adaptor	£189.90	CP1610	2.4	5K		20x12	Tv	●	160x96	C		1				Cassette	Ba	●	M7	Computer adaptor is £89.95
ITT 3030	£3,105	Z80A	4	64K	256K	80x24	Tv(M+)		80x24	W	8	1			2x280K5¼F	CP/M, BOS	Ba	●	I7	Top end business system
Jupiter Ace	£90	Z80	3.25	3K	51K	80x24	Tv(M+)		80x24	C	●					Kalamazoo	Fr	●	J1	Native Forth machine
Kalamazoo 1050	£3,450	8085	6	64K		80x24	Tv(M+)		80x24	W	10				2x250K5¼F		Ba	●	K3	Only Kabol language
Kaypro II	£1,949	Z80	4	64K		80x24	M		80x24	W	●	1			2x200K5¼F	CP/M	Ba	●	C15	PCN issue 35
Kaypro 10	£3,340	Z80A	4	64K		80x24	M		100x160	W	●				1x10Mb5¼H	CP/M	Ba	●	C15	PCN issue 35
Kemtron K2000E	£2,242	Z80	4	64K		80x24	(M+)		80x24	W	●	2			1x300K5¼F	CP/M	Ba	●	K4	Scientific Keyboard
Kemtron K3000	£3,795	Z80	4	64K	256K	80x24	(M+)		80x24	W	●	2			2x1Mb8F	CP/M, MPM	Ba	●	K4	For scientific use
Kenilworth 83G	£1,953	Z80A	4	64K		80x25	TvM		160x75	W	●	1			2x350K5¼F	CP/M	Ba	●	K5	British portable
Kontron RSI 80	£3,306	Z80	4	64K	128K	80x25	M		256x512	W	●	2			2x303K5¼F	Kontron	Ba	●	K6	O/S CP/M based
Krypton 800 range	£1,949	Z80A	4	64K	256K	80x24	M		80x24	W	●	2			2x386K5¼F	CP/M	Ba	●	T8	Fully definable characters
Laser 200	£70	Z80A	3.6	4K	64K	32x16	Tv	●	32x16	C	●	1					Ba	●	C14	Cheap colour computer
LSI M3	£2,064	Z80	2.5	64K		80x24	M		80x24	W	●	1			2x200K5¼F	CP/M	Ba	●	L3	Big, British and CP/M
LSI M4	£2,472	8088	5	128K	256K	80x24	M		160x72	W	●	2			2x400K5¼F	CP/M 86, CP/M80	Ba	●	L3	Z80 for 8-bit software
Logica VTS Vitesse	£2,863	8086	5	64K	256K	80x24	M	●	640x288	W	●	1			2x1Mb5¼F	CP/M, MS-DOS	Ba	●	L4	High-res colour graphics
Magnum	£1,489	Z80	4	64K		80x25	M		24x80	W	●	2			2x400K5¼F	MOS, MDEX	Ba	●	M2	Inexpensive CP/M machine
Marin Chip M9900	£5,750	9900	3	64K	1.6Mb	24x80	M		24x80	W	●	4			2x1.2Mb8F		Ba	●	M2	Genuine 16-bit
Merlin M2215	£2,742	8085	5	64K		24x80	M		24x80	W	●	2			2x780K5¼F	CP/M	Ba	●	B7	Business computer
Micro Five 1000	£5,175	8088	8	128K	512K	25x80	TvM		512x512	W	●	10			2x1Mb5¼F + 2x6.3Mb5¼H		Ba	●	F2	*Choose your own O/S
Micro Five 3000	£10,350	8086	5	128K	1Mb	25x80	TvM		512x512	W	●	2			1x10Mb8F		Ba	●	F2	*Choose your own O/S
Microdecision	£1,144	Z80	4	64K		80x24	(M+)		80x24	W	●	5			1x200K5¼F	CP/M	Ba, Pilot	●	M9	*Terminal extra
Microsolution British Genius	£1,840	Z80	4	64K		80x24	TvM		80x24	W	●	1			2x160K5¼F	CP/M	Ba	●	M4	'Genius' by nature?
Microtran 65	£389	6502	1	8K	48K	25x64	(TvM+)		80x25	W	●	1				Tanbug	Ba	●	M8	PCN issue 26
Millbank SX10	£2,754	Z80A	4	65K	256K	80x25	M		80x25	W	●	2			2x350K5¼F	CP/M	As	●	M5	Scientific applications
Minstrel	£2,059	Z80	4	64K	352K	80x25	M		80x25	W	●	2			2x400K5¼F	CP/M opt	Ba	●	H4	Choose your terminal
Molecular M200	£5,462	Z80	4	64K	320K	40x24	(M+)		80x25	W	●	2			1x10Mb8H + 1x500K8F	CP/M	Ba, As	●	G2	*Terminal required
Monroe EC8800	£2,990	Z80A	3	128K		40x24	M		240x240	W	●	3			1x320K5¼F	Monroe	Ba, Pilot	●	F3	Only 40-character screen
Monroe OC8810	£3,162	Z80A	3	128K		80x24	M		80x24	W	●	3			1x320K5¼F	Monroe	Ba, As	●	F3	Bigger model available
Mupid 320-GB	£978	Z80A	4	64K	128K	40x24	Tv(M+)	●	320x240	W	●	1				CP/M+	Ba, As	●	P6	PCN issue 22
Nascom 2/3	£327	Z80A	4	2K	64K	16x48	Tv(M+)		48x96	W	●	4				NAS, SYS	Ba, As	●	L5	Old reliable
NCR Decision Mate V	£1,983	Z80A	4	64K	512K	24x80	M	●	640x400	W	●	2			2x320K5¼F	CP/M 80	As	●	N3	PCN issue 8
NEC PC8000	£1,454	Z80	4	32K	64K	80x25	M	●	160x100	W	●	2			2x300K5¼F	CP/M, NEC, DOS	Ba	●	N1	Superb colour graphics
NEC PC8001	£1,375	Z80A	4	64K		80x24	M	●	100x200	W	●	1			2x144K5¼F	CP/M	Ba	●	N1	Price includes twin disk drive
New Brain A	£269	Z80A	4	32K	512K	80x30	Tv(M+)		640x220	C	●	2				Cassette	Ba	●	G3	A lot of promise
North Star Advantage	£2,766	Z80	4	64K		80x24	M		640x240	W	●	15			2x360K5¼F	CP/M	Ba	●	T9	16-bit option
North Star Horizon	£2,294	Z80	4	64K	512K	80x24	M		800x240	W	●	1			2x360K5¼F	North Star DOS	Ba	●	T9	*Choose your own terminal
OEM Orion	£3,392	8086	8	128K	896K	80x25	TvM		800x400	W	●	11			2x500K5¼F	CP/M 86	Ba, Co	●	O5	*Full communications machine
Olivetti M20	£2,869	Z8000	3	160K	512K	80x25	M	●	512x256	W	●	1			2x320K5¼F	PCOS	Ba	●	B6	Real 16-bit
Olympia Boss Model A	£2,645	Z80A	4	64K		80x28	M	●	80x28	W	●	1			2x140K5¼F	CP/M	Ba	●	O1	Useful 28 lines on screen
Onyx 5001 MU	£7,607	Z80A	4	128K	256K					W	●	5			1x7Mb5¼H	CP/M	Ba	●	T2	*Terminal extra, other models
Oric 1	£80	6502A	1	16K	48K	40x28	Tv(M+)	●	240x200	C	●	1				Cassette	Ba	●	O2	4-colour printer opt

HARDWARE

Make and model	Price inc VAT	Processor type	Speed in Mhz	Standard RAM	Max RAM - normally at extra cost	Display		Graphics	Keyboard		Interfaces built-in				Storage	Operating system	Languages inc	Other languages available	Distributor	Comments
						Method (at extra cost)	Colour capability		Max dot resolution	Type of keyboard	No of function keys	No of RS232	No of Centronics	No of IEEE 488						
Tandy Model 100	£499	8085	2.4	8K	32K	40x8	LCD	240x62	W	1	1	1	1	1	1	Ba		T4	Software built in	
Tandy TRS-80 PC2	£130	Cust.	1.3	2.6K	16K	26x1	LCD	156x7	C	6						Ba		T4	Plotter available	
Televideo TS-80ZH	£4,533	Z80	4	64K	80x24	80x24	M	80x24	W	15	2	1	1	1	1	C11		C11	Recently upgraded	
Televideo TS-800 Series	£1,495	Z80A	4	64K	80x24	80x24	M	80x24	W	15	2	1	1	1	1	C11		C11	Standard CP/M machine	
Televideo TS 1602-C	£1,323	8088	5	128K	256K	80x24	M	576x424	W	15	2	1	1	1	1	C11		C11	Graphics, but no colour	
Tiger	£3,214	Z80	4	62K	256K	80x24	M	512x512	W	10	1	1	1	1	1	H5		H5	PCN issue 36	
TI Professional Computer	£2,386	8088	5	64K	256K	80x25	M		W	12						H5		H5	PCN issue 3	
Texas CC-40	£180	Cust.		6K	18K	31x1	LCD	31x1	C	4						Ba		T5	Cartridge software available	
TI System 200-250	£6,695	9900	4	64K	80x24	80x24	M	80x24	W	12	1	1	1	1	1	T5		T5	Bigger version available	
TMK 332	£2,242	8085A	5	64K	80x24	80x24	M	190x96	W	22	2	1	1	1	1	P5		P5	*6502 I/O processor	
Torch	£3,214	Z80	4/2	96K	80x30	80x30	TvM	640x256	W	15	1	1	1	1	1	T6		T6	CP/M compatible	
Toshiba T-100	£1,900	Z80A	4	64K	96K	80x25	TvM	640x200	W	8	1	1	1	1	1	O4		O4	Pro test March 18	
Toshiba T-200	£2,242	8085	2.6	64K	80x24	80x24	M	80x24	W	15	1	1	1	1	1	O4		O4	Standard CP/M machine	
Transam Truscan	£1,983	Z80A	4	64K	80x24	80x24	TvM	640x288	W	15	2	1	1	1	1	O4		O4	S-100 machine	
Triton 4	£5,744	Z80A	4	64K	160K	80x24	M	80x24	W	8	1	1	1	1	1	T11		T11	Upgradable to Winchester disk	
Tulip 1	£1,150	8086	8	128K	896K	80x24	M	760x288	W	16	1	1	1	1	1	N2		N2	IBM PC software compatible	
Vector 4	£3,852	8088	5	128K	256K	80x24	M	640x312	W	15	1	1	1	1	1	A4		A4	8-bit and pseudo 16-bit	
Victor 9000	£2,754	8088	5	128K	896K	80x25	M	800x400	W	7	2	1	1	1	1	D8		D8	Same as Sirius 1	
Wang Professional	£3,076	8086	8	128K	256K	80x25	M	800x300	W	16	1	1	1	1	1	W4		W4	8087 co-processor optional	
Wicat 150	£6,846	68000	8	256K	1.5Mb	80x25	M	400x300	W	20	2	1	1	1	1	S10		S10	Upgradable to 32 user system	
Wilkes YD8110	£4,025	8086	5	128K	896K	80x24	M	960x624	W	21	1	1	1	1	1	W2		W2	Standard CP/M machine	
Xerox 820 Model II	£2,415	Z80A	4	64K	80x24	80x24	M	1024x512	W	18	2	2	2	2	2	R4		R4	Powerful graphics	
Zenith ZF-120-22	£2,978	8088	5	128K	192K	80x25	M	640x225	W	18	2	1	1	1	1	Z1		Z1	PCN issue 28	
Zeus 4	£5,400	Z80	4	64K	320K	80x25	(M+)	80x25	W	11	10	10	10	10	10	As		M5	Designed as multi-user	

A1 Acorn Computers, Cambridge 245200 **A2** Adds (UK) Ltd, 01-949 1272 **A3** Ads Ltd, 01-947 4881 **A4** Almarc Data, Nottingham 52657 **A5** Atari International (UK), Slough 33344 **A7** ACT, 021-454 8585 **A8** Apple Computers, Hemel Hempstead 60244 **A9** Anderson Jacobson Ltd, Slough 25172
B1 Barcellos Ltd, Leicester 541574 **B2** Bonsai, 01-580 0902 **B3** Britannia Computer Ltd, Dudley 233433 **B4** British Micro, Watford 48222 **B5** Business Computers Ltd, 01-207 3344 **B6** British Olivetti, 01-785 6666 **B7** Bromley Computer Consultancy, 01-697 8933
B8 British Telecom Merlin, 01-840 4567
C1 Computer Peripherals Ltd, 01-278 7837 **C2** Country Computers Ltd, Redditch 29826 **C3** Computer Ancillaries, Egham 36455
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AT LAST, A HOME COMPUTER THAT IMPROVES WITH AGE.



It's surprising how many first-time relationships with a home computer go sour with age.

You buy an attractive, discounted little machine so that you and the children can learn about computers.

Instead, you learn about its limitations: the dull graphics. The plugs that fall out. The cheap power supply. The unalterable "beginners" language. The stiff, fragile keys. No provision for future developments. If only you'd looked around a bit in the beginning... "Quality costs a little more, but it's usually worth paying for" (Personal Computer News - CGL M5 Review, June '83.)

The CGL M5 is designed and built by Sord, one of Japan's leading computer specialists, with three main ideas in mind.

First, to be easy and fun to learn and operate.

Second, to be rugged enough to last through hours and hours of operation.

And third, to form the basis of a powerful, versatile home computer system that won't need replacing until you're ready for a dedicated business system.

Built to learn

The CGL M5 is designed to be easy for non-geniuses to use.

"On the M5, most of the work is done for you, and all that is left is the need to work out what to do next, rather than how to do it." (Personal Computer News, June '83.)

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Budding video game designers and computer artists will love to get their hands on the 16 colour graphics and 32 moveable images called "sprites."

"The M5 makes professional graphic

effects very simple for even the beginner to achieve." (Personal Computer World, Aug. '83.)

Built to last

"It works first time, doesn't need a lot of mollycoddling and jiggery-pokery to persuade it to continue to do so, and what's even better; it continues to work well. You don't have to balance cold cartons of milk on the top, shove matches in the back to keep the plugs in, or press the keys with several pounds force to make them respond." (Personal Computer News, June '83.)

Being able to build things that work and carry on working without endless maintenance is something at which the Japanese seem to excel.

Built to grow

To be truly versatile, a home computer has to understand very different things.

So you need different "languages," which the M5 provides by supplying part of its memory in plug-in cartridges.

"The M5 eliminates the worst limitations on machines at this level, which is that they tend to be stuck with whatever language is provided by the management." (Personal Computer News, June '83.)

The computer is supplied complete with a Basic-I cartridge, a standard integer BASIC language and a simple learning text.

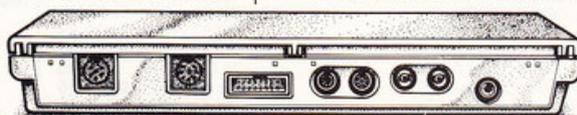
Plug in the Basic-G cartridge, and you can access the M5's incredibly sophisticated graphic and sound capabilities which are far in advance of similarly-priced computers.

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on big computers with equally big price tags.

The FALC cartridge provides a tailor-made language for data management, spreadsheet accounts and business problems. Combine FALC with a disc and you could "turn the M5 into a small business machine." (Personal Computer Magazine, August '83.)

Now, take a look at the back of the M5.



Notice the sockets (usually an extra) for a standard

Centronics-type printer, the separate video monitor and hi-fi sound output.

Even the language cartridge socket has hidden potential:

"Unlike most such sockets, this one has 56 internal lines connected to it giving access to just about every function in the computer. This means that just about everything you can think of can be added onto the computer, ranging from a Prestel interface to second processor to use as an intelligent terminal on a timesharing computer"... (Electronics - The Maplin Magazine, March '83.)

Take a look at the home computer that will improve with age.

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BUILT TO LEARN. BUILT TO LAST. BUILT TO GROW.

David Janda checks out a chess program and decides the White Knight has earned his chevrons.

White Knight MKII, by Martin Bryant, has been developed in several stages over a period of years. This is important because one major prerequisite of a good chess program is an experienced chess programmer.

Although dramatically changed since its early days, a similar version was entered at the 1982 PCW Show and won second prize for best amateur program. Since then, it has been tidied up, boxed up, and is made available for the BBC model B by BBC Soft.

Features

White Knight offers a number of facilities for playing ordinary and tournament chess, as well as for solving chess problems.

The commands allow you to set up the board for problem-solving, self play and so on. Two time clocks give the elapsed time for each player, which can be set.

White Knight gives you an idea of the mechanics of computer chess. When White Knight is thinking of its move, the lookahead depth of its search is displayed below the board. Also, to the right of the board the best line (move) is displayed and this can give you an idea of how the computer is going to play. Unfortunately, you can't turn off this part of the display.

Finally, after the computer's move, the number of positions examined is displayed. Pressing any key while the computer is thinking will abort the search and the best move so far will be played.

The game operates in one of four modes; equality, problem, tournament and average. In equality mode, the program tries to keep its elapsed-time-clock closely matched to the player's. This means that the program will play at a similar speed to the player, though unlike humans the machine doesn't get distracted.

Problem mode is used to solve chess problems. The problem is set up using the alter command and mating combinations of up to five moves can be found. Once a solution is found, you can play the move or tell the computer to go off and try to find an alternative.

Tournament mode offers the more advanced player first and second time controls, the duration of which are decided by the player. The program will not claim a win on time.

Finally, the fourth mode is the one which will be used more frequently than most. In average mode, the only limit is the time for each move with zero seconds being the fastest response time. The longer the time White Knight has, the better it plays so this effectively gives you thousands of levels of play.

Two facilities which are missing from White Knight are the ability to save a game to disk or tape and the ability to get a hard copy printout of the game's progress. Maybe these essential features will be included in later versions.

Presentation

White Knight MKII comes in a plastic and cardboard affair with the cassette and

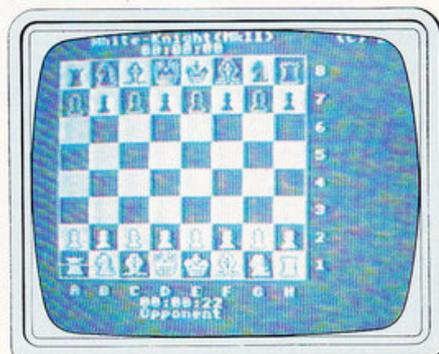


Going on board

manual.

The instructions are brief and to the point. Everything is there that should be, but a few readings are required before running the program.

First comes the BBC Soft logo, then the Basic loader and finally the object code itself. If you wish to change the foreground or background colours of the display, then you will have to LOAD the Basic loader and change some VDU 19 statements. This is messy, and it should have been taken care of by the program rather than you having to fiddle about with the code.



Pick your gambit

In play

White Knight MKII plays by brute force and then follows up the high scoring moves in more detail, which is why the more time you give it, the better it plays. However, White Knight will play a reasonable game given a short time; the default for the average mode is ten seconds a move, which also gave a reasonable game. Still on average mode, specifying a longer time per move makes the game harder, and you can go as far as you wish. This is the mode for beginners who wish to 'work their way up' through the levels.

With tournament mode, the 'book' players are going to be disappointed; there are no book openings in White Knight MKII. This isn't surprising as the game was written in only 20K. And whether this affects the whole outcome of the game can be left to the purists to argue. The game was a bit weak in the opening moves, but I don't think this is due to the lack of book openings. Indeed, after the initial moves, White Knight settles down to give you a good run for your money.

If you use a chess board to design and tackle chess problems, White Knight is for



Alternatively, the King can retreat, or the Rook can move about. But it doesn't seem to matter because White Knight doesn't want to know.

Verdict

White Knight MKII plays a very strong game — especially mid-game — which will suit most people's tastes.

The flexibility in setting up tournament time parameters is a blessing for those wishing to play a more disciplined game, but for those who wish to play at 'levels' the average mode will suit them very well.

I hope the problem mode's difficulties are sorted out, because it is one of the game's strongest selling points. Apart from this, White Knight MKII is very highly recommended.

RATING

- Features
- Documentation
- Performance
- Usability
- Reliability
- Overall value



Name White Knight II **Application** Chess-playing program **System** BBC **Price** £11.50 **Publisher** BBC Publications, 35 Marylebone High Street, London W1M 4AA **Format** Cassette **Other Versions** None **Outlets** Mail Order/Retail.

White Knight vs White Knight

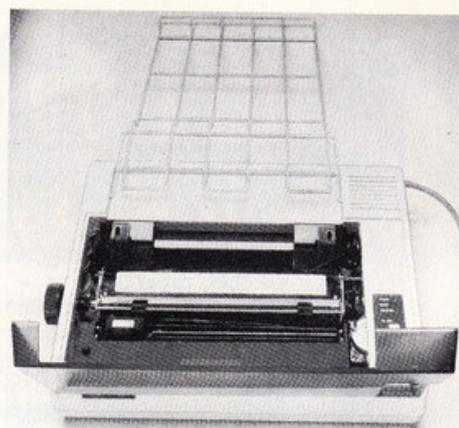
you. The speed at which it finds mating combinations is very impressive. From a collection of Meredith's chess problems, not one needed more than eight seconds before White Knight came up with one.

There were difficulties with the problem mode though. First, when seeking out a route to mate, White Knight would do its best to avoid a route which involved en-passant for either side, even though en-passant is supported. This may be related to a couple of problems which White Knight refused to answer. To one below is a good example:

Mrs T B Rowland, 1889.

WHITE Ra5, Rc2, Pe2, Sf2, Pf7, Kf8, Qg4
BLACK Pd4, Kd6, Re6, Pf4, Pf6

When set up, you can see that the key move is Pe4. After that, black can capture en-passant from the D or F ranks.



Specifications of the new Walters WM80

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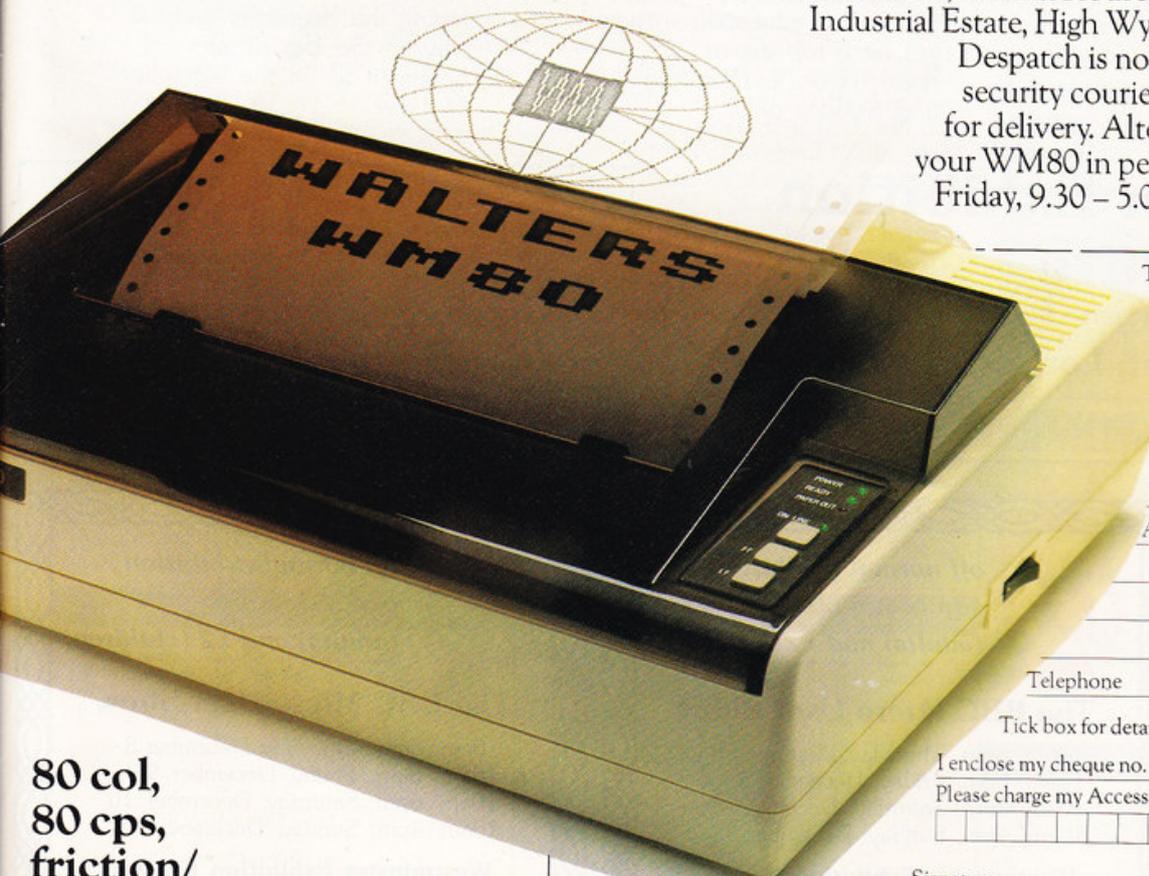
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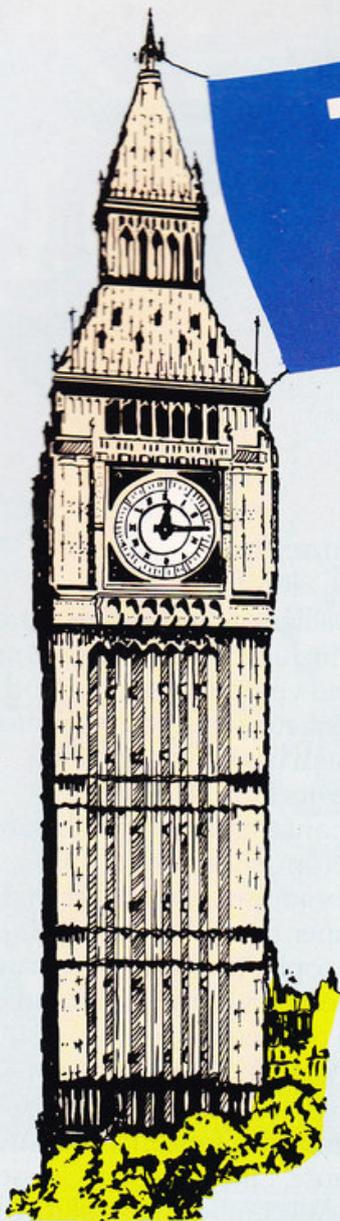
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Greycoat Street, London SW1.

Bryan Skinner feels Basic programmers need more programming aids — does CRF have enough?

Basic helpmate

CRF (Cross Reference Utility) is a programming aid for use with programs written in Basic on the IBM PC. It doesn't do much and is rather expensive, but it does show there are possibilities which have not yet been explored, which is surprising since there are so many Basic programmers.

Features

CRF will plough through your Basic program and make up disk files which you can view on the screen or send to a printer. The 'analytical' functions are related to references to variables in your program. One of these will compile a cross-reference list, by line number, of every variable used in the program.

It also provides a breakdown of the number of lines, number of unique variables and explicit variable definitions (such as single precision). It will also pick out miscellaneous definitions such as DEF FN (Figure 1).

The second function gives the same information in alphabetical order of variables (Figure 2). This was more useful since you can see at a glance the line numbers where a variable is used.

The third process allows you to assign comments to variables in order to make your cross reference print out more readable (Figure 3).

Presentation

CRF comes in a large binder which looks like a book. The colourful, glossy, hard cover is a bit of an oversell for the slim volume and disk inside, and while the cover would be difficult to misplace, the manual might well slip away.

In use

CRF couldn't be easier to use. The hardest part is making sense of the manual which manages to make the simplest operations

sound complex. There's even a TRANSFER file which allows you to copy all two necessary files your working disk without having to use the IBM's COPY command. The nicest thing about CRF is that it's set up to use the function keys, so when you get the main menu you just hit the keys you want, then F10 to have them all executed.

I entered a very simple program to test CRF initially (Figure 4), though I needn't have bothered as a sample file is provided which lets you see how it works. Your Basic file has to have been saved in ASCII format, as in SAVE "PROG".A. If no extension is given, CRF defaults to .ASC.

Another problem was that you have to make sure there is at least a 38.5K of free space on your working disk for CRF's files.

CRF is fully error trapped. Error 25 occurs if you turn off the printer during printout, returning you to the main menu. CRF will not accept a file in non-ASCII format and will report the problem if there is a lack of space either on the disk or in the disk directory. There's simply nothing else to go wrong.

Verdict

CRF is a moderately useful piece of software. It is, however, overpriced given its limited scope. Although it's a step in the right direction in terms of Basic debugging and optimising, it would have been nice to have seen rather more facilities included.

The program used to test CRF

```
10 REM SIMPLE PROGRAM
20 REM CIRCLE CIRCUMFERENCE AND AREA FROM RADIUS
40 PI=22/7
50 DEF FNC(RA)=2*PI*RA
60 DEF FNA(RA)=(RA*RA)*2*PI
70 CLS
80 PRINT "ENTER RADIUS ";
90 INPUT RA$
100 RA = VAL(RA$)
110 IF RA < 0 THEN CLS:PRINT RA$;" IS INVALID, PLEASE RE-ENTER":GOTO 80
120 CLS
130 PRINT "CIRCLE OF RADIUS ";RA
140 PRINT "CIRCUMFERENCE   =";FNC(RA)
150 PRINT "AREA               =";FNA(RA);" SQUARE UNITS"
160 PRINT:PRINT
170 PRINT"PRESS SPACE TO CONTINUE, OTHER KEY TO EXIT"
180 A$ = INKEY$:IF A$="" THEN GOTO 180
190 IF A$=CHR$(32) THEN GOTO 70
200 CLS
210 END
```

Fig 4

If you don't specify an extension for the cross-reference files, the extension CRF is provided.

There are one or two limitations that caused problems during review. The most important of these is that CRF will only tackle programs up to about 450 lines long or using a maximum of 850 variable references. These figures are not exact; they will be determined by such factors as the length of variable names etc. This won't be a problem for many users, but reflects badly on the claim that CRF 'enables a programmer to ... achieve maximum capability from a computer system'.

RATING

Features
Documentation
Performance
Usability
Reliability
Overall value



Name Cross Reference Utility (CRF)
Application Programming aid **System** IBM PC
Price £29.27 **Publisher** Sumar Corporation
Format Cassette **Outlets** Mail Order
Prentice-Hall Inc., 66 Wood Lane End, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. Spectrum Books (ISBN 0-13-194746-X).

Variables by Line Number

40	PI	Fig 1
50	PI RA	
60	RA RA PI	
90	RA\$	
100	RA RA\$	
110	RA RA\$	
130	RA	
140	FNC() RA	
150	FNA() RA	
180	A\$ A\$	
190	A\$	

Fig 1

Variables Alphabetically

A\$	180	180	190	Fig 2		
FNA()	150					
FNC()	140					
PI	40	50	60			
RA	50	60	60	100	110	130
	140	150				
RA\$	90	100	110			

Fig 2

Statistics on CIRCLE.ASC

Total Line Count	20
Lines with Variables	11
Variable References	19
Unique Variables	6

Explicit Variable Definitions:
None

Misc. Explicit Definitions:
50 FNC(RA)
60 FNA(RA)

Elapsed Time: 0 Min 23 Sec

Statistics on CIRCLE.ASC

Total Line Count	20
Lines with Variables	11
Variable References	19
Unique Variables	6

Explicit Variable Definitions:
None

Misc. Explicit Definitions:
50 FNC(RA)
60 FNA(RA)

Elapsed Time: 0 Min 15 Sec

Statistics on CIRCLE.ASC

Total Line Count	20	Fig 3
Lines with Variables	11	
Variable References	19	
Unique Variables	6	

Explicit Variable Definitions:
None

Misc. Explicit Definitions:
50 FNC(RA)
60 FNA(RA)

Elapsed Time: 0 Min 14 Sec

Commented Variables for CIRCLE.ASC

A\$	Continue yes/no
FNA()	Area of circle
FNC()	Circumference of circle
PI	PI
RA	Radius (user-defined)
RA\$	To trap input errors

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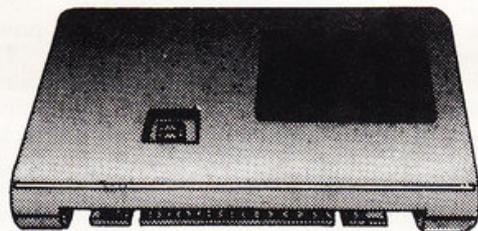
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Bob Chappell casts an eye over six Oric games and decides some are more ordinary than others.



Oric omnibus

ZORGON'S REVENGE

More like several games in one, this latest from IJK has you attempting to rescue the Princess Roz from the evil clutches of Zorgon. The only way to get into Zorgon's castle is by crossing the moat, which has first to be bridged by dropping magic stones into it. Each of the four stones can only be won by completing a mission.



In Bird Mission, you must catch hold of a flying bird which will transport you to higher levels and Light Bridges where you will find a stone. Beware falling rocks! Space Mission sets you zapping alien craft — the freighter carries a stone. In Spider Mission, you must avoid quicksand, leap for a dangling rope, dodge the spider, and watch out for an unhygienic bird. Quadnog Mission has hydra-headed beasts spitting venom at you.

After each successful mission, you get the chance to drop the stone into the moat. When all four stones are in place, you can enter the castle where a further challenge awaits.

With its excellent graphics and concept, this is sure to be a big seller. Undoubtedly one of the best Oric games on the market.

DRACULA'S REVENGE

Another enemy seeking vengeance is our old fiend, Dracula.



Although you are not the Lone Ranger, you do happen to possess a gun and a plentiful supply of silver bullets. You have therefore been elected to clear the various Transylvanian castles of their unpleasant contents.

What you see on the screen is a cross-sectional view of the castle interior; ladders join the various floors. Pretty soon werewolves will scurry up the ladders to greet you on the top floor — a silver bullet is the antidote. Ghosts can only be disposed of by exposing them to daylight; a leap to a window at

either end of a floor does the trick. Vampires are treated similarly but only when it is mid-day and they never venture onto your floor unless it is safe.

A pleasant enough game with good animated graphics. It lacks variety, though — all you get for surviving is more of the same only faster.

HELL'S TEMPLE

I have mixed feelings about this one. The game itself is quite good. It's



a maze game in which, using single key commands, you do battle against monsters as you search for treasure.

The cassette inlay is a different matter. It says the game is a state of the art adventure — it isn't anything of the sort. It is a standard, multi-level maze game in which nearly every room looks the same (three walls and doorways). The inlay has a grisly picture on the front which smacks more of sensationalism than artistic licence, and talks of hi-res colour graphics. The only interesting graphics come in the title/instruction sequence. Don't expect to see any monsters or objects — you only get to read their names (a small-print leaflet inside the case tells you there wasn't enough room in the program to use graphics to depict any of the monsters).

Finally the inlay says, in bold black lettering, 'parental guidance recommended for children under 16 years'. I can't imagine what they mean unless it's guidance on not believing everything you read since this game wouldn't frighten a timid tortoise.

The game itself is good value for money and is an enjoyable fantasy romp. I just hope Kenema does something about that cover — it could give the game a bad name, and that would be unfair.

ULTIMA ZONE

From Tansoft comes this shoot-em-down game. Stage 1 has mandarin-faced aliens dropping bombs



down on your ship, which can only move left or right along the lower portion of the screen. If hit, the aliens release a fireball that breaks open a pen, releasing demented butterflies. You have a shield which affords temporary protection from the bombs, fireballs and butterflies.

Stage 2 has you firing at a device which, when hit, moves up or down and shoots sideways at stationary aliens. In Stage 3, you must manoeuvre your craft, frogger-like, through a steady flow of assorted spacecraft in an attempt to dock with a mother ship above. Completion of this gives you the mixture as before, but with faster and more numerous aliens.

Not tremendously varied or original. Nevertheless, the attractive graphics and sound plus sensibly placed control keys make it worth considering if you're looking for this type of game.

DIGGER

If you're familiar with Apple Panic, the arcade favourite then,



Digger will ring bells. You scurry about a multi-level complex, shinning up and down ladders in your endeavours to transport bags of gold to the bank. Monsters try to catch you, but you can thwart them by digging holes, luring them in, and promptly refilling the hole.

You can take a shortcut to another floor by jumping down a freshly dug hole, if you like, as

you have only a limited amount of time to complete your objective. Four skill levels are available and full on-screen instructions are provided.

The animation is rather jerky and the controls could be better placed. The monsters only differ in colour. Not a bad version of the game, though there are likely to be better ones around eventually.

DIG DOG

Max the Mutt has to recover his buried bones (before the rats get them) by digging underground tunnels. Max can munch the rats if he has enough strength, otherwise they will munch him. And that's about it, really.

A graphically respectable dog doesn't make up for what is not a very interesting game. With little else in it to stimulate, it soon palls, despite Max's joyful sprint across the screen at the start of every game.

INVALID
MOVE!
SOUTH--
CMD

Zorgon's Revenge (£8.50), IJK Software, Unit 3C Moorfields, Moorpark Avenue, Bispham, Blackpool

Dracula's Revenge (£6.95), Softek International, 12/13-Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London WC2

Hell's Temple (£12), Kenema Associates, 1 Marlborough Drive, Worle, Avon SB22 0DQ

Ultima Zone (£8.35), Tansoft, 3 Club Mews, Ely, Cambs CB7 4NW

Digger (£6.95), Mercury Microware, 1 Duxford Walk, Moston, Manchester 10

Dig Dog (£6.90), Taskset, 13 High Street, Bridlington, YO16 4PR

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QUITE SIMPLY THE BEST

SPECTRUM

Ghosts in 3-D

Name Haunted Hedges **System** Spectrum 16/48K **Price** £6.95
Publisher Micromega, 230-236 Lavender Hill, London SW11 1LE
Format Cassette **Language** Machine code **Other versions** none **Outlets** Retail.

It did seem that every possible variation on Pac-Man short of Pac-Man on Ice had been tried, but here comes a new one — a 3D version.

Objectives

In this you're collecting gold coins which are scattered around a more limited version of the famous maze, all the while being pursued by four ghosts. You can pick up one of the ice-picks lying about and become the pursuer . . . until the ice-pick melts, that is. From time to time assorted treasures will appear, and if you can get these before they go again you earn extra points.

In play

The opening menu offers you several options: pressing I will get you the instructions; S will start the game; E will exit the game; H will hold a game, freezing the frame; pressing keys 1-5 will select the appropriate ghostly intelligence level, from moronic to Mensa; and K will enable you to choose which four keys you would like to use to control the movements.

What 3D means in effect is that instead of looking straight down onto the maze your

viewpoint has been shifted slightly to one side to give the impression of depth, as if the characters were indeed running round a maze of hedges.

This 3D feeling is certainly effective, but although the graphics are impressive in this respect they're not quite matched by the movement of the man.

He does dart about quickly enough, though, and he will continue to run in a particular direction till you press another key, meaning that you can pre-program him to turn the next corner. If you're nippy enough with your three lives and can score 10,000 points you gain an extra life. There's a high-score record at the top of the screen, and each time you complete a screen you get a new one with more gold coins on it, as well as a general increase in speed, of course.

The game is definitely quick enough to be challenging, and four super-intelligent ghosts hurtling round proved too much for me. There's no sound apart from a sprinkling of plinks.

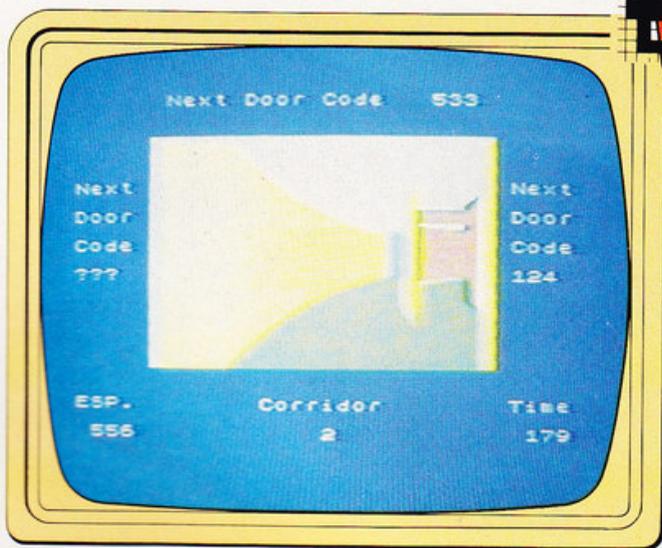
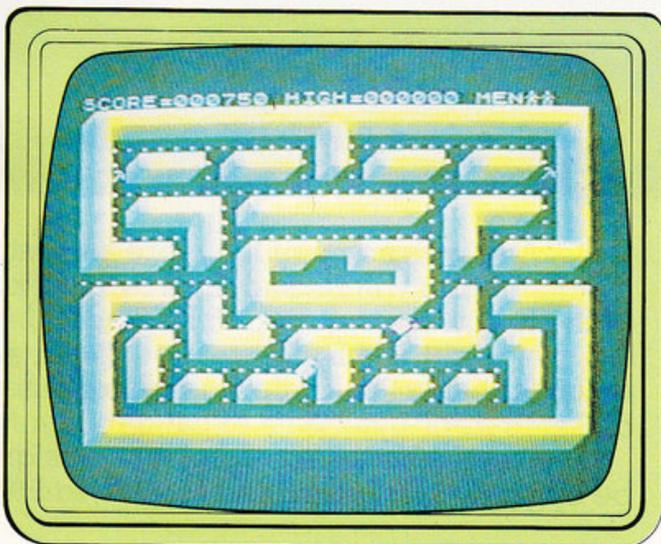
Verdict

If you have a version of Pac-Man it's hardly worth getting another, but if you're hankering after one and don't insist on a carbon copy . . . well, 3D or not 3D, that is the question? My answer would be yes.

Mike Gerrard

RATING

Lasting appeal 
Playability 
Use of the machine 
Overall value 



Sci-fi maze

Name Corridors of Genon **System** 48K Spectrum **Price** £5.95 **Publisher** New Generation Software, The Brooklands, Sunnybank, Lyncombe Vale, Bath BA24NA, tel: (0225) 316924. **Format** Cassette **Language** Machine code **Other versions** None **Outlet** Mail order and Spectrum dealers.

Maze games, particularly the three dimensional variety, are becoming quite thick on the ground and authors are having to introduce new elements to tickle the customer's jaded palate. Here's one that has some novel features — circular corridors, sliding doors and code breaking.

Objectives

Genon is destroying the galactic system. One hope remains — to penetrate the inner sanctum of Genon's computer centre, destroy it, then get out again. A nasty creature called Bogul patrols the corridors and will try to stop you. Doors in front and to either side must be opened for access to the inner layers — they can only be unlocked by a unique code. You are in a race against time and the enemy.

In play

Supplied with the game is a neat, gold-numbered overlay which transforms the lefthand side of the Spectrum keyboard into an easily distinguishable numeric keypad.

The game starts by giving you an opportunity to practise your skills at code breaking. The screen displays a console surrounded by flashing lights. Rather like the old Mastermind

game, you need to find a three-digit code — the console displays a histogram telling you if a number is correct and in the right sequence. When the histogram shows a pile of six black squares, you've cracked the code.

You then plunge into the corridors, a series of curving red and yellow tunnels. Blue squares ahead or to the side are closed doors which must be opened by typing in the appropriate code. To help you, the top of the screen shows the positions of three adjacent doors, the codes of which are displayed or left as question marks. Entering the correct code causes the door to slide up with a hiss, allowing you entrance.

The steady sound of plodding footsteps alerts you to the nearby presence of Bogul, a round bodied, long-limbed creature. Meeting it head-on is harmful to your health. If you bolt through a door with Bogul close behind, it's advisable to shut it again (with the code) to hinder the creature's progress. Meanwhile, the central computer is opening and closing doors by itself and there is always a chance that the door before you may open by itself and bring you face to face with you-know-who.

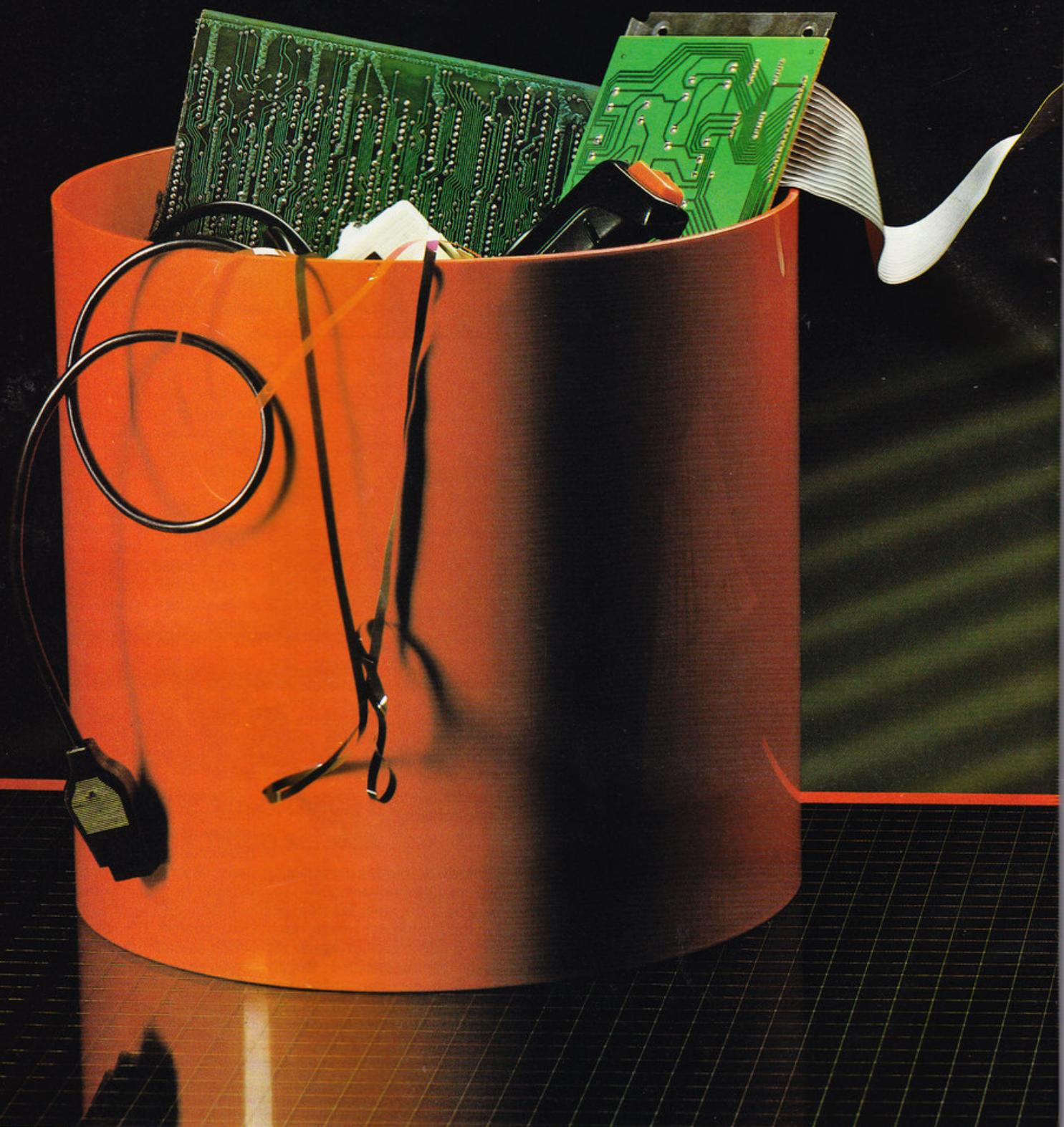
Verdict

An unusual game but the combination of maze-running and code-breaking may prove a bit too complicated for some tastes.

Bob Chappell

RATING

Lasting appeal 
Playability 
Use of machine 
Overall value 



After you've owned a micro for a while you begin to wish you'd invested in a bigger memory.

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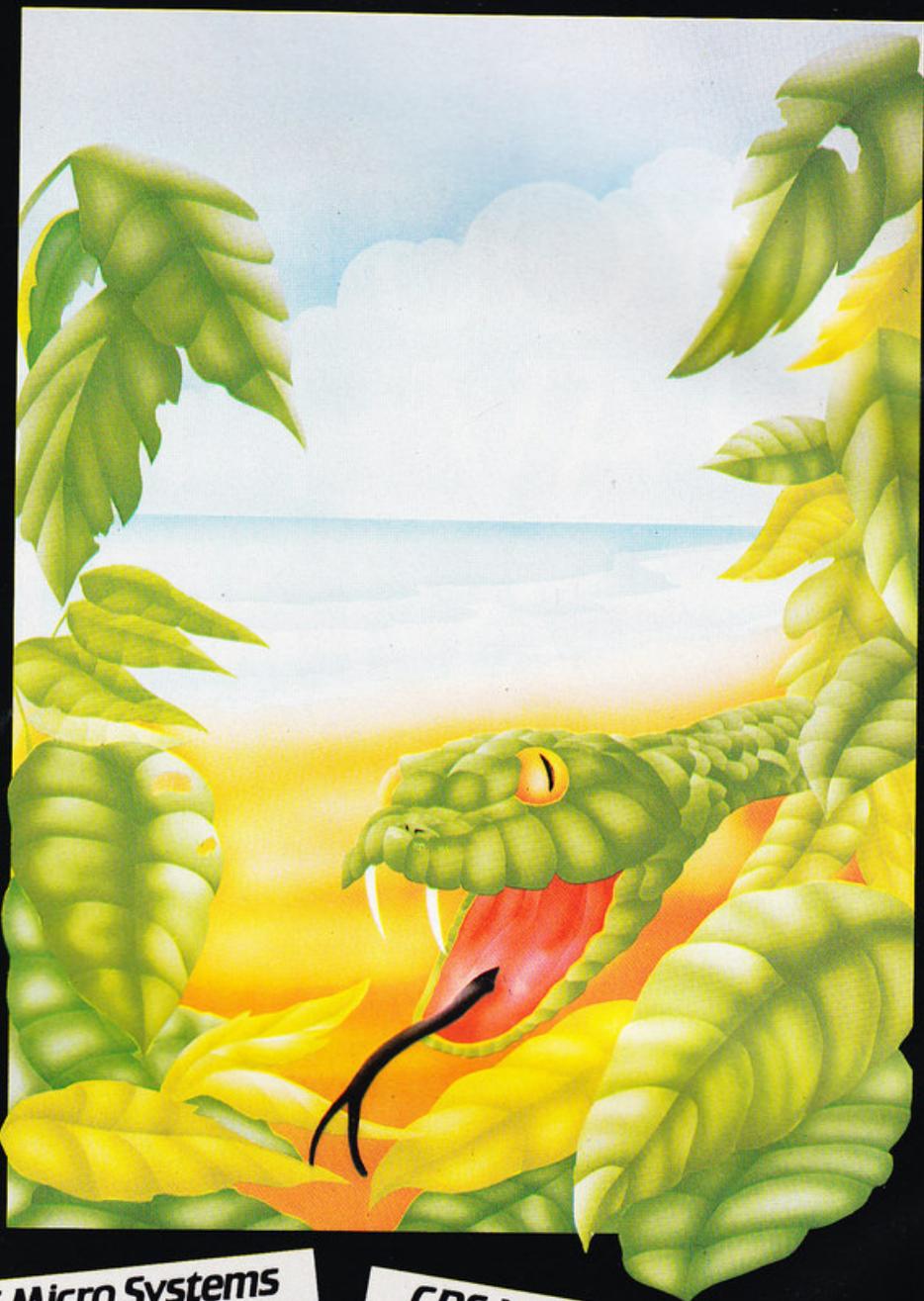


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BBC Model B

Germ of an idea

Name Microbe System **BBC Model B** **Price** £7.95 **Publisher** Virgin Games, 61/63 Portobello Rd., London, W11. **Format** Cassette **Language** Machine code, maybe a little Basic **Other versions** None **Outlet** Retailers/mail order.

Microbe is an excellent, and fast game. It is the first game from Virgin that I've been really impressed by, and I'm still spending far too much time playing it.

Objectives

You have managed to find your way inside a huge alien. You are the microbe of the title. Your aim is to destroy the alien from the inside. This is of course impossible as the defences of the alien's inner reaches and its various parasites are intent on destroying you, but I am addicted to trying...

In play

Playing the game depends to a certain extent on how fast you can keep pressing the spacebar. That's what you use for firing, and firing is the only way to stay alive.

The microbe appears as a large and brightly coloured hornet type figure. Not that I've ever seen a micro-organism this shape, but if it's fun — who cares? It is attacked by antibodies, red blood cells, amino acids and spores, and you control the microbe across the bottom of the screen with keyboard or joystick.

You do have the option of rising up into the middle of the screen, but it seems like suicide, since you can only fire forwards.

Although it's just another variant on the old space-invaders theme, it really did get me going. It's possibly partly to do with the speed of the game. The microbe fires as often as you press the spacebar, and there doesn't seem to be any limit to the game's speed.

One small criticism is that once you've got to about the 10,000 point mark (and that's not easy) the game just starts repeating. Even so it's never very long before you've been hit. And it certainly gets the adrenalin racing, and the wrist and fingers aching too. It strikes me that if the game was played too much then it might damage the keyboard, although I never had the opportunity to find out what it might do to a joystick.

The usual impeccable Virgin instructions, and an interesting biographical note on the programmer, accompany the program, and the usual 'Join the Virgin Games Gang' offer.

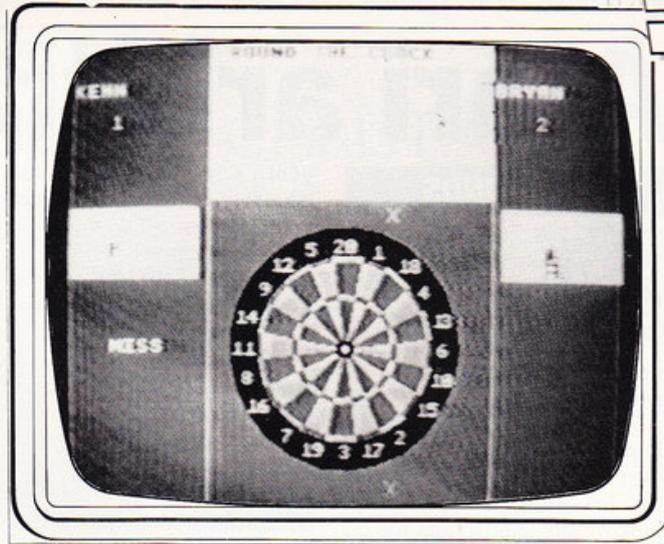
Verdict

The game is wonderful. Apart from some initial loading difficulties (in the end I succeeded with the B side where I'd failed with the A), the game is a great example of what can be done on the BBC. I'm addicted.

Piers Letcher

RATING

Lasting appeal 🐛🐛🐛🐛
Playability 🐛🐛🐛🐛🐛🐛
Use of machine 🐛🐛🐛🐛🐛🐛
Overall value 🐛🐛🐛🐛🐛🐛



Target practice

Name One Hundred & Eighty System **BBC Model B** **Price** £6.90 **Publisher** A & F Software 830 Hyde Road, Manchester, M18 7JD **Format** Cassette **Language** Basic **Other versions** None **Outlet** Mail order/retail.

This game comprises every version of 301 you'd like (even 101, 201... 901), a noughts and crosses game, round the clock, and Shanghai. And the aim is, of course, to beat your opponent.

In play

It is difficult to come up with a really captivating game that emulates darts.

The feel of the dart in your hand, poised for flight, is missing for a start. It is possibly daft to try, in fact, as any attempt to recreate the atmosphere of live darts is lost the moment you touch the keyboard.

The game does call upon certain skills however. The ability to judge where you are in three dimensions is essential, and you have to guide your dart on its flight.

The screen is split into several sections. The dominant one is the darts board from a frontal view. The BBC's high resolution gives it a welcome clarity.

The next part is the throwing area seen from the side, and it's interesting to see that if you throw your dart a long way above the board it ends up in this area.

The screen also shows the two players, one sitting and the other standing. They don't seem to do anything else.

Talking of two players brings me to one of my most serious criticisms of the whole game: this is that you can't play against the computer.

If you don't happen to have a friend around, you can only use the game for target practice if you play for both people. And when each part of the game is finished you go back to the start. Not quite the start though, as it comes back asking for the second player's name only. ESCAPE will get you right back.

Other aspects are quite unusual too. The dart is lined up first of all in the horizontal plane, and then you loose it off. At that point you start controlling its up and down progress. Tricky, but more irritating than fun.

The horizontal control has a built in shake that is quite hard to master, and the skill level simply determines how bad your shake is. The glide is quite amusing in its own way.

Verdict

I'm a little bit disappointed with this game, particularly as the BBC has so much potential than is used here.

The graphics are not particularly wonderful and the resources of the machine aren't that well used.

To add to my own particular problems, I've got a disk operating system. To load the program type *TAPE, PAGE=& E00, CHAIN'', and the best of luck.

Piers Letcher

RATING

Lasting appeal 🐛🐛
Playability 🐛🐛
Use of machine 🐛🐛
Overall value 🐛🐛



These Atari games have been appraised and applauded by Bob Chappell.

Atari arbitrator

DIAMONDS



English Software has brought out an excellent version of the tunnel-digging species of arcade game.

A prospector's lot is not a happy one. Digger Dan, an ever-hopeful diamond prospector, has stumbled on a likely-looking site. Shovelling for all he's worth, Dan carves out a series of underground tunnels, searching for the elusive carbon. He is not alone. A blob-like creature is after Dan. Not only that, a tidy soul called a Filler keeps running around filling in the freshly dug tunnels. Fireflies, snakes, ghosts and a demon also give Dan a hard time. The only way Dan can survive to enjoy the fruits of his labours is to undermine rocks so that they fall and impede the monsters — better still, make the cave-in squash the pursuers flat.

There are 16 levels, each of four screens. Finishing the fourth floor on level 16 reveals the Great Diamond — English Software is offering a more tangible reward (a trophy and free software) with an associated competition.

Diamonds is a compulsive game with attractive graphics and sound. A great excuse to skip digging the garden.

FIREFLEET



Another good one from English Software — which is beginning to produce games to compete with American software for the Atari. Firefleet also has you delving underground, but in a large spaceship. The ship descends through a tortuous maze of caves, bombing away for dear life. The bombs are required for two reasons. Firstly, there are enemy cannons and tanks taking potshots at you as you pass by. Secondly, you need to do a bit of gate-crashing, so to speak.

There are four sectors, of increasingly difficult. Altogether, there are an astonishing 34 different screens of

gently scrolling, crisp graphics. The ship is just a fraction too wide for comfort — this makes the game a pretty tough challenge even on the lower sectors. Some of the twists and constrictions in the caves will have your jaw bouncing off the lino and your heart playing a drum-roll. All in all, a real test of nerve and co-ordination and, at under £10, very good value for money.

AE



Something to do with the Japanese for Sting Ray, AE is aptly named.

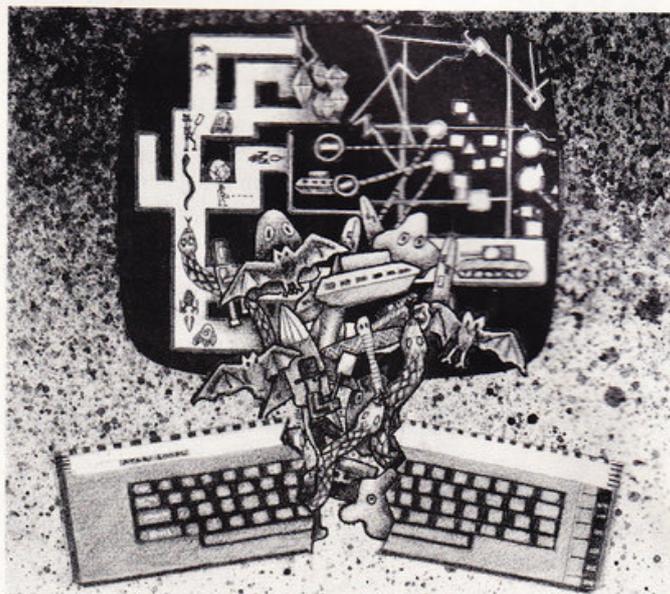
Although the theme is the familiar one of a space showdown, the aliens are a school of robots having every appearance of the aforesaid rays. The game has excellent 3D effects set against interesting backgrounds — the first is a futuristic city.

The robots (planetary vacuum cleaners gone homicidal) come swooping over the horizon in single file, swirling like a kite-tail. After threading their way round a couple of buildings, they are soon right overhead, dropping bombs. Because of the three dimensional effect, shooting back is not easy. You must judge the height and distance precisely.

Holding down the fire button and releasing it at the critical moment detonates an air bomb. You have to explode the missile right in the path of the leader — with luck, the leader and most of the followers will plough into it, going off like firecrackers. However, if just one of the wave escapes back over the horizon, your shooting is wasted as only complete destruction of a wave counts.

To progress to other levels, you have to knock out three waves. Higher levels have different backdrops and the AE use different flying formations, including splitting up to attack singly from every which way.

Due, I believe, to the program not being properly adapted for British TV systems, there is very little colour in the graphics. Nevertheless, the game has excellent 3D effects, good sound and a novel scenario which make it well worth having.



COMPUTER WAR



Thorn EMI's latest has a grim theme. Based on the film, War Games,

Computer War puts you in charge of NORAD, the North American Air Defense System. On screen is a map of the USA and two banks of flashing lights. Approaching the nuclear bases marked on the map are several white blips — attacking missiles. Someone has broken into the computer and activated its nuclear war simulation program. Unfortunately, this computer doesn't know it's only make believe and unless you knock out the simulated attackers, it will start a global thermonuclear war.

Moving a sight across the map to one of the blips and zooming in brings up a scrolling landscape through which you track and shoot down the attacking missile. When a wave of missiles has been stopped, you must attempt a code breaking exercise (pattern matching on the banks of lights). This part is pretty feeble since you don't need to work it out: there are only 12 possibilities, and a simple sequential movement of joystick and fire button solves it quickly every time.

Any missile getting through to a US base brings war closer; if one reaches NORAD itself, war begins.

The whole affair is done very well; the graphics are interest-

ing and it makes effective use of sound. I might have enjoyed it more were it not for the awful reality of the theme — nuclear war. It's not easy to forget this when the program hands out such messages as 'Global nuclear war initiated' as I felt this was one of those subjects too sensitive to be placed in an entertainment context. The program does have a moral, though. As it says, 'The only winning move is not to play'.

CAVERNS OF KHAFKA

INVALID MOVE! SOUTH--CMD

A great title for a game and a pretty good game, at that.

A vast complex of claustrophobic chambers is filled with all sorts of hazards and obstacles: acid pits, crushers, moving floors, boulders, darts, bats, deadly walls, etc. Down these mean caves someone must go — you, but very carefully.

Excellent graphics and very, very challenging — makes Kafka's nightmares look like a Disney feature.

Diamonds, Firefleet (disk and cassette £9.95) English Software, Box 43, Manchester M60 1BW

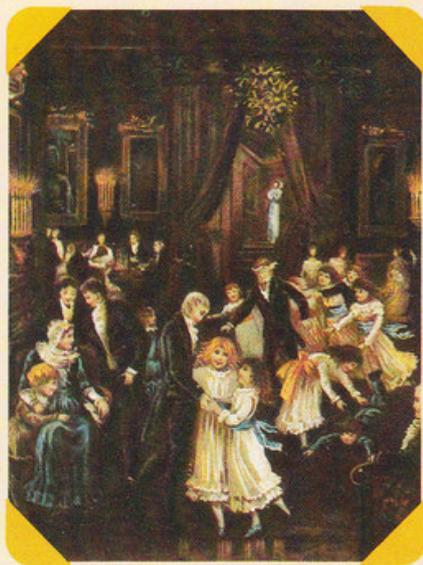
Computer War (cartridge £29.95) Thorn EMI Video, Upper St Martin's Lane, London WC2N 9ED

AE (disk £24.95) Broderbund, USA

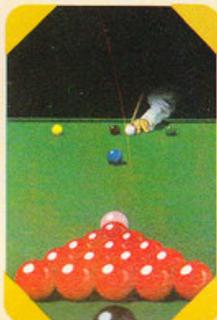
Caverns of Khafka (cassette £14.95) Cosmi, USA.

The programs are available from Home Computers, 234 Church Street, Blackpool FY1 3PX. Tel: (0253) 22340 and other Atari dealers.

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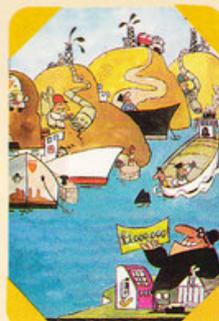
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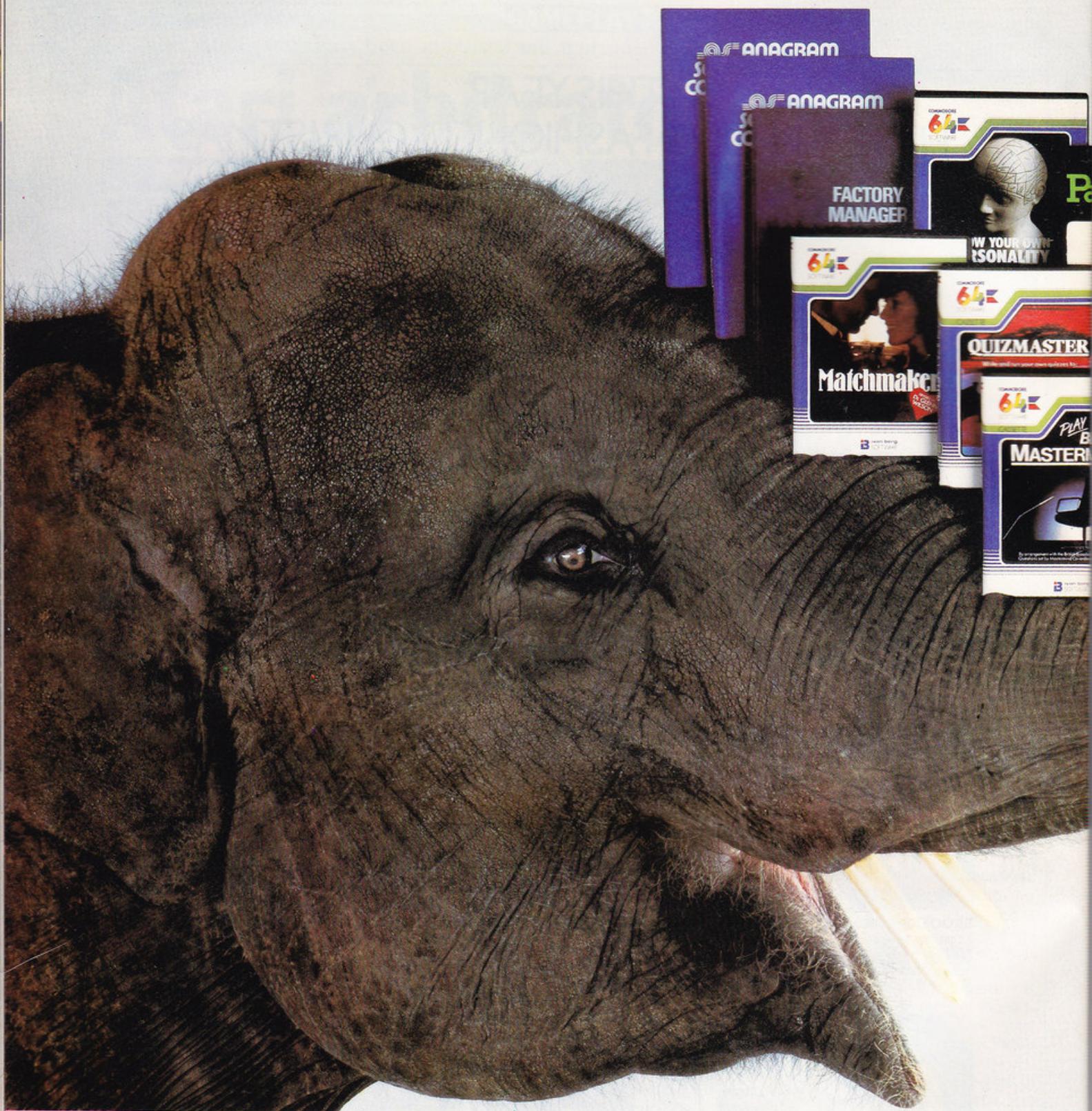


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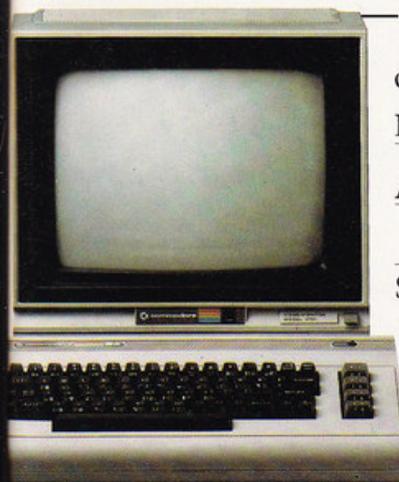
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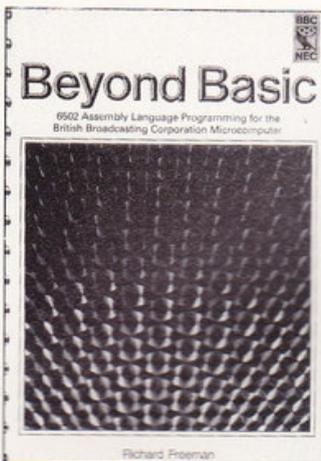
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 **commodore**

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Which book would your micro want you to buy? PCN's review page helps you choose.



'Beyond Basic' by Richard Freeman, published by BBC Publications and National Extension College at £7.25 (paperback, spiral bound, 256 pages).

The daunting complexities of an assembler routine to someone used to a tolerant language like Basic can be very off-putting. One approach to teaching machine code is to combine a self assessment textbook with programs ready to load into the computer. This is what Richard Freeman has done for the BBC micro in 'Beyond Basic'.

It starts with an outline of aims, a brief description of assembly language and reasons for its use. A series of self assessment questions and assignments are intended to test the knowledge acquired from each part of the text. The questions all have solutions at the end of each chapter, and in themselves provide a good deal of useful information. Green text highlights new or important information.

The early units are fairly predictable. It is difficult to devise new ways of explaining binary and hexadecimal or the structure of registers and memory locations. The assembler statements LDA and STA are the first to be introduced and the author takes this opportunity to explain the procedures necessary to include an assembler routine within a Basic program.

The uses of labels and single-byte addition and subtraction are covered in Unit 2 and with Unit 3 describes the processor status register with its various flags, and outlines conditional and unconditional branches, subroutines and the use of the X and Y.

Unit 4 gets into the nitty-gritty of addressing modes,

each of which is covered with examples of applications. This is true throughout the book; the reader is left feeling that the exercises do have practical application.

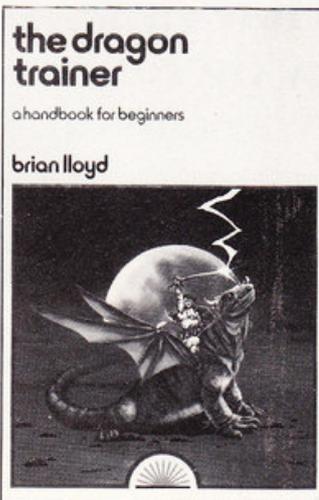
Multiplication and division are dealt with in Unit 5 and a discussion of lists and tables is well set out in Unit 6. The author begins here to use 400 built-in operating system routines offered by the BBC micro. Unit 7 describes use of the stack, one of the best explanations in the book, and masking, a complicated subject not completely demystified here.

Unit 8 is devoted to operating system calls, which is an area other assembler texts have fallen down on in the past.

Unit 9 covers 16 bit multiplication and division and sorting of strings, again illustrated by practical programs. Unit 10 rounds off the course with sections on common errors and programming style and appendices cover the BBC micro/ASCII character set and the 6502 instruction set.

The cassette to go with 'Beyond Basic' includes all example programs listed in the book. However, none of the programs are particularly long and none should be beyond even the one-fingered typist.

I rate the book very highly. It is exhaustive, not exhausting, and covers most of the subject exactly and clearly. **SW**



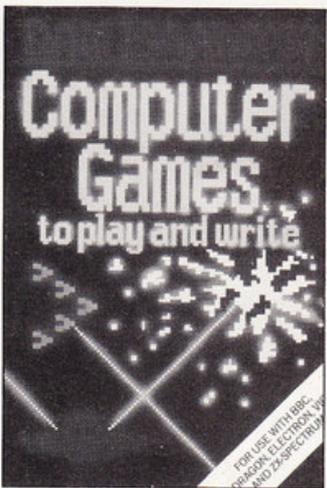
'The Dragon Trainer — A Handbook for Beginners' by Brian Lloyd, published by Sunshine at £5.95 (paperback 181 pages).

This is obviously written for first time micro owners which provides an immediate limitation to the book. This person

could become a proficient Dragon user with its aid, without even needing recourse to the manual, but the problem is that few such people exist. Hardly anyone is methodical enough to pick a book off the shelf at the same time as buying a computer. Most of us are more likely to get it home, fiddle around with the leads and sockets until it works, and then start playing. By which time Chapter 1 (possibly more) is redundant.

The introduction itself limits the apparent scope of the book, by saying that it should be read from cover to cover, since this no longer allows the reader the freedom to use the book as a reference guide, for fear of missing something vital.

The book's other major problem is that it doesn't really cover much more than there is in the User Manual, though it is much clearer to read. Also the author has added a 40-page appendix of six programs, but most of these are not particularly inspiring. **PL**



'Computer Games to Play and Write' by Dan Isaaman, published by Sparrow Books at £1.50 (paperback, 126 pages).

For just £1.50, this book offers clear and concise help for programmers of the Spectrum, BBC, Dragon, Electron and Vic. Dan Isaaman does this by having most of each program the same for all machines, and then an additional few lines that are machine specific. Though this limits the scope of the games, it doesn't matter too much.

Far more important than their scope is how these games stimulate your creativity and encourage you to write your own computer games. There is even a game at the end of the

book that takes you from a game's concept through to the finished work, explaining in detail what decisions are made and how they are implemented.

The book includes a chapter on Basic and its commands, though I think you would need a pretty good knowledge of Basic to find this useful. From 'Basic . . . isn't like English' to 'using the POKE instruction you can . . .' in just five pages is a little brief.

As a guide to how to write your own programs this is a good buy. Particularly useful are the author's program notes which enable you not only to understand his approach to each game, but also to learn how to change it yourself and gain experience through experimentation. **PL**

'Games, Graphics and Sounds by Susan Curran and Ray Curnow, published by Windward at £5.95 (paperback, 144 pages).

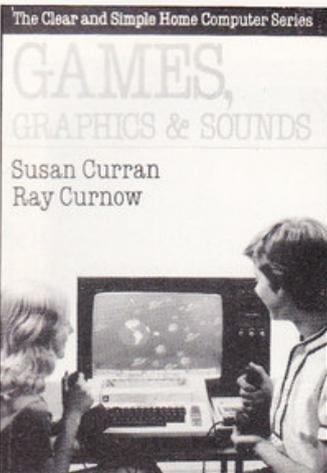
If you're interested in where games began, and what they'll be like in the future, you might find this book useful.

I've only seen one other book by these authors (First steps in Basic), and that also was lucid, and presented in such a way as to make the information it contained as accessible as possible.

It is a lucid and well-presented technical guide to computer games, graphics, sounds hardware and how to write games programs, all with excellent diagrams and summaries.

Half the book consists of programs, which, though not remarkable, give an understanding of how they work.

The programs are in Micro-soft Basic and are, therefore, suitable for most machines. **PL**



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PCNProgramCards

Shipment

Card 4 of 6

8339SH4/6

```

4035 IF t=1 AND h$(17 TO 20)="00
04" THEN GO TO 4050
4040 IF t=2 AND h$(17 TO 20)="00
26" THEN GO TO 4050
4050 GO TO 4090
4060 IF VAL h$(133 TO 361)>=1000 T
HEN LET h$(12 TO 15)=STR$ 1000
4065 IF VAL h$(133 TO 361)=0 THEN
GO TO 4090
4070 LET a=VAL h$(133 TO 361): LET
h$(33 TO 361)=STR$ (a-1000)
4080 IF t=1 THEN LET r#=#
4085 IF t=2 THEN LET c#=#
4090 REM *****
4100 LET q=INT (RAND*4)+1: LET a#
(110 TO 111)=STR$ q
4110 LET x=1: FOR f=1 TO LEN a#:
PRINT INK 7;AT 21,0;a$(x TO f)
4120 IF f>=32 THEN LET x=x+1: PR
USE 5
4130 NEXT f
4140 IF INKEY$="y" THEN GO TO 41
60
4145 IF INKEY$="n" THEN GO TO 42
00
4150 GO TO 4140
4160 IF t=1 THEN LET h#=#: LET
u#=#
4165 IF t=2 THEN LET h#=#: LET
c#=#
4167 IF VAL h$(12 TO 15)=0 THEN
GO TO 4210
4170 FOR f=1 TO LEN u$ STEP 4:
IF h$(17 TO 20)=u$(f TO f+3) THE
N GO TO 4174:

```

```

4172 NEXT f: STOP
4174 IF LEN u$(f TO f+4)<4 THEN
LET h$(17 TO 20)=u$(145 TO 148):
GO TO 4170
4175 LET h$(17 TO 20)=u$(q#4+f T
O q#4+f+3)
4176 PRINT AT VAL u$(f TO f+1),U
AL u$(f+2 TO f+3); PAPER 0;
4177 IF t=1 THEN PRINT PAPER 0;
INK 2;AT VAL h$(17 TO 18),VAL h#
(19 TO 20);"AB"
4180 IF t=2 THEN PRINT PAPER 0;
INK 5;AT VAL h$(17 TO 18),VAL h#
(19 TO 20);"EF"
4182 IF h$(17 TO 20)<>"1324" THE
N GO TO 4190
4183 BEEP 1,35
4184 LET h$(124 TO 201)=STR$ 1000:
LET h$(12 TO 15)=STR$ 0
4185 PRINT PAPER 0;AT 13,24;"
"; LET h$(17 TO 20)=u$(1 TO 3)
4190 IF t=1 THEN LET r#=#
4192 IF t=2 THEN LET c#=#
4195 GO TO 1150
4198 REM *****
4200 IF t=1 THEN LET h#=#
4205 IF t=2 THEN LET h#=#
4210 IF VAL h$(124 TO 201)=0 THEN
GO TO 4270
4220 FOR f=1 TO LEN r$ STEP 4:
IF h$(19 TO 32)=r$(f TO f+3) THE
N GO TO 4230:
4225 NEXT f: STOP

```

4035-4040	Check that lorries are in factories	4090-4095	Replace updated results back into current player's string.	4170-4172	Get current position.
4060	If amount of stock held is 1000 then load lorry with 1000.	4100	Select random distance to move truck or boat.	4174-4183	Position lorry.
4065	If amount of stock is zero then continue.	4110-4150	Ask if truck is to be moved and respond.	4183	Beep when lorry is 'in port.'
4070	Subtract 1000 from current amount of stock.	4160-4165	Get current player's road data and status strings.	4184	Transfer load from lorry to ship.
		4167	Check that lorry has a load.	4190-4192	Replace status string.
				4200-4205	Get current status string.
				4210	Check that there is something in ship before it is moved.
				4220-4225	Get position of ship

PCNProgramCards

Shipment

Card 5 of 6

8339SH5/6

```

4230 IF q>(LEN r$(f TO f+4)-4) TH
EN LET h$(129 TO 321)="1913": GO T
O 4240
4235 LET h$(129 TO 321)=r$(q#4+f T
O q#4+f+3)
4240 PRINT AT VAL r$(f TO f+1),U
AL r$(f+2 TO f+3); PAPER 1;"
";
4245 IF t=1 THEN PRINT PAPER 1;
INK 2;AT VAL h$(129 TO 321),VAL h#
(131 TO 321);"CD"
4250 IF t=2 THEN PRINT PAPER 1;
INK 5;AT VAL h$(129 TO 321),VAL h#
(131 TO 321);"CD"
4255 IF h$(129 TO 321)<>"1913" THE
N GO TO 4290
4257 BEEP 1,35
4260 LET q=VAL h$(124 TO 201)*(INT
(RAND*4)+1)+VAL h$(1 TO 81): LET
h$(1 TO 81)=STR$ q: LET h$(124 TO
201)="0000"
4265 LET h$(129 TO 321)="1424": PR
INT PAPER 1;AT 19,13;"
";
4290 IF t=1 THEN LET r#=#
4295 IF t=2 THEN LET c#=#
4300 GO TO 1150
8990 STOP
8998 REM *****
9000 RESTORE 9020: FOR f=USR "a"
TO USR "f"+7
9010 READ a: POKE f,a: NEXT f
9020 DATA 0,63,63,63,63,63,24,0
9030 DATA 0,240,240,252,252,252,
96,0

```

```

9040 DATA 0,3,3,15,15,127,63,31
9050 DATA 0,192,192,240,240,264,
254,248
9060 DATA 0,15,15,63,63,63,12,0
9070 DATA 0,252,252,252,252,252,
48,0
9080 PRINT AT 3,9; INVERSE 1;"**
*SHIPMENT**"; INVERSE 0;AT 5,6;
"© J. Donnelly 1983"
9090 PAUSE 50
9100 PRINT AT 11,4;"Do you want
the rules";AT 13,4;"and instruct
ions (y/n)."
9110 IF INKEY$="n" THEN GO TO 92
00
9115 IF INKEY$="y" THEN GO TO 91
30
9120 GO TO 9110
9130 CLS: PRINT AT 1,1;"SHIPMEN
T is a "board" game of busin
ess strategy."
9135 PRINT AT 4,1;"The aim is to
make as much money as you
can within a certain number
of days."
9140 PRINT AT 8,1;"You must buy
stock, deliver it to Ex-Port by
truck, and from there by ship
to your buyer at In-Port."
9145 PRINT AT 13,1;"Each player
gets the chance to buy stock an
d move either ship or truck onc
e each day."

```

4230-4255	Move ship.	4265	Position ship back at in port.
4257	Beep when in port.	4290-4295	Replace the status strings.
4260	Update the capital with the profit made and remove the cargo from the ship.	9000-9070	Define the ships and the lorries.
		9080-9120	Ask for instructions and act upon the results.

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PCN Program Cards

Shipment

Card 6 of 6

8339SH6/6

```

9147 PRINT AT 18,3;"Press any ke
9148 to continue."
9149 PAUSE @:CLS
9150 PRINT AT 1,1;"Each player #
will start with $10000 in cap
ital and $1000 of stock. One tr
uck and one ship."
9155 PRINT AT 5,1;"You will be a
sired each day if you want to b
uy stock. If you do press y an
d at the prompt input how muc
h you are buying."
9160 PRINT AT 11,1;"After that y
ou will be given a number of pt
s to move and asked if you
want to move your truck."
9165 PRINT " If you answer yes y
our truck will be moved otherw
ise, if your ship is loaded it
will be moved."
9167 PRINT AT 19,3;"Press any ke
9168 to continue."
9169 PAUSE @:CLS
9170 PRINT AT 1,1;"There will be
news items in the game. This can be t
o your advantage or not as the
case may be."
9175 PRINT AT 7,1;"Each players #
oney will be updated betwe
en turns."
9180 PRINT AT 11,1;"In a moment
you will be asked for how many

```

```

days you want to play. T
ry between 40 and 70."
9190 PAUSE 500
9200 INPUT "How many days? ";g:
CLS:GO TO 10
9400 REM *****
9500 DATA "If your ship is at #
a half your stock is stolen.",24
.20,.5
9501 DATA "Your production is do
ubled due to oversight !!!",33,30
.0
9502 DATA "Fire at the factory d
estroyed nearly all your stock.",
33,30,.25
9503 DATA "Strike at Ex-Port cos
ts you 50% of your capital in wa
rehouse costs.",1,0,.5
9504 DATA "Your buyer says he'l
l pay double for your next ship#
ent, if your ship has left Ex-Port
.",24,20,.2
9505 DATA "Your driver has half
his load stolen.",12,15,.5
9506 DATA "Your factory goes on
strike for one day costing you 2
5% of your stock.",33,36,.75
9507 DATA "The stock exchange th
inks your worth money. Your stoc
k is now worth four times as muc
h.",33,36,.4
9900 SAVE "Shipment" LINE 1

```

9130-9190 Playing instructions.

9500-9507
9900

Data for news items.
Line used to save the program
to autorun.

PCN Program Cards

Monitor 64

Card 5 of 8

8339MO5/8

```

2060 IFSS=1THEN3010
2070 CO$=RIGHT$(CO$,LEN(CO$)-F):IFLEN(CO$)<>10THEN500
2080 IFLEFT$(CO$,1)<>". "THEN500
2085 IFMID$(CO$,6,1)<>". "THEN500
2090 H$=MID$(CO$,2,4):GOSUB600:IFH=-1THEN500
2095 SA=H
2100 H$=RIGHT$(CO$,4):GOSUB600:IFH=-1THEN600
2110 EA=H
2120 IFEAC=3ATHEN500
2130 PRINT:PRINT:OPEN2,1,1,NA$:PRINT#2,SA:PRINT#2,EA
2140 FORS=SATOEA:PRINT#2,PEEK(S):NEXT:CLOSE2:GOTO200
3000 REM*****
3001 REM MEMORY LOAD ROUTINE
3002 REM*****
3003 IFCO$="L"THENNA$="":GOTO3010
3005 SS=1:GOTO2005
3010 PRINT:OPEN2,1,0,NA$
3020 INPUT#2,SA,EA
3030 FORG=SATOEA:INPUT#2,A:POKEG,A:NEXT:CLOSE2:GOTO200

```

2070 Remove the file name from the front of CO\$.

2080-2085 Check to see if the first and sixth characters are full stops.

2090-2110 Jump to 600 to convert hexadecimal addresses back into decimal.

2120 Check to see if the start address is less than the end address.

2130-2140 Save the data in memory to tape.

3000-3030 Load data from tape into memory at the same place it was saved from.

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PCN 3

PCN Program Cards

Monitor 64

Card 6 of 8

8339MO6/8

```

4000 REM*****
4001 REM     MEMORY MODIFY ROUTINE
4002 REM*****
4005 IFLEN(CO$)<>29THEN500
4010 AD$=MID$(CO$,2,4)
4020 H$=AD$:GOSUB600:IFH=-1THEN500
4030 AD=H:FORG=6TO27STEP3:IFMID$(CO$,G,1)<>" "THENER=1:G=27
4040 NEXT
4050 IFER=1THENER=0:GOTO500
4060 CO$=RIGHT$(CO$,23)
4070 FORG=1TO23STEP3:H$=MID$(CO$,G,2):GOSUB600:IFH=-1THEN500
4080 POKEAD,H:AD=AD+1:NEXT
4090 GOTO200
4500 REM*****
4501 REM     MACHINE CODE 'FILL' ROUTINE
4502 REM*****
4510 D=2:SS=0:IFLEN(CO$)<>14THEN500
4520 IFMID$(CO$,2,1)<>" "ORMID$(CO$,7,1)<>" "ORMID$(CO$,12,1)<>" "THEN500
4525 H$=MID$(CO$,3,4):GOSUB600:IFH=-1THEN500
4530 A1=H:H$=MID$(CO$,8,4):GOSUB600:IFH=-1THEN500
4540 A2=H:H$=RIGHT$(CO$,D):GOSUB600:IFH=-1THEN500
4542 IFSS=1THEN4610
4545 IFA2<A1THEN500

```

4000-4005	Check if the length of CO\$=29. If no then goto 500.	4020	Convert AD\$ to decimal.	4500-4540	Decodes the command.
4010	Takes four characters, starting from the second, from CO\$ and store in AD\$.	4030-4040	Checks to see if spaces are in the correct places.	4545	Checks to see if the second address is less than the first address.
		4050	If not then go to 500.		
		4060-4090	Pokes the data into memory.		

PCN Program Cards

Monitor 64

Card 7 of 8

8339MO7/8

```

4550 IFA1=A2THENPOKEA1,H:GOTO200
4560 POKE252,INT(A1/256):POKE251,A1-256*PEEK(252)
4570 POKE254,INT(A2/256):POKE253,A2-256*PEEK(254)
4580 POKE2,H:SYS40710:GOTO200
4600 REM*****
4601 REM     MACHINE CODE 'MOVE' ROUTINE
4602 REM*****
4605 D=4:SS=1:IFLEN(CO$)<>16THEN500
4606 GOTO4520
4610 IFA2<=A1OR(H<=A2ANDH>=A1)THEN500
4620 POKE252,INT(A1/256):POKE251,A1-256*PEEK(252)
4630 A2=A2+1:POKE821,INT(A2/256):POKE820,A2-256*PEEK(821)
4640 POKE254,INT(H/256):POKE253,H-256*PEEK(254)
4650 SYS40740:GOTO200
5000 REM*****
5001 REM     RETURN VALUES IN REGISTERS
5002 REM*****
5010 PRINT"#####REGISTERS:#####"
5020 PRINT"##### = " :H=PEEK(780):GOSUB700:PRINTH$,
5030 PRINT"X = " :H=PEEK(781):GOSUB700:PRINTH$,
5040 PRINT"Y = " :H=PEEK(782):GOSUB700:PRINTH$
5050 GOTO200

```

4550-4580	Pokes the required data into memory for use by machine code subroutine and the calls the machine code subroutine.	4610	Checks to see that AD3 is not between AD1 and AD2, or if AD2 is less than AD1.	5020-5040	Convert decimal numbers in memory locations 780-782 into hexadecimal numbers by jumping to 700.
4600-4605	Checks the length of CO\$.	4620-4650	Pokes the required data into memory for use by machine code subroutine and then calls the machine code subroutine.		
4606	Jumps to 4502 to decode the command.				

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PCNProgramCards

Monitor 64

Card 8 of 8

8339M08/8

```

5100 REM*****
5101 REM ALTER VALUES IN REGISTERS
5102 REM*****
5105 IFLEN(C0$) <> 5 THEN 500
5110 Z=0:N$=MID$(C0$,2,1)
5120 IFN$="A" THEN Z=780
5130 IFN$="X" THEN Z=781
5140 IFN$="Y" THEN Z=782
5150 IFZ=0 THEN 500
5160 H$=RIGHT$(C0$,2):GOSUB 600:IFH=-1 THEN 500
5170 POKEZ,H:PRINT:GOTO 200
6000 REM*****
6001 REM DISPLAY SYNTAX FOR COMMANDS
6002 REM*****
6004 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT " D AAAA.BBBB - DISLAY MEM"
6005 PRINT " M AAAA.BBBB.CCCC - MOVE MEM"
6010 PRINT " F AAAA.BBBB.CC - FILL MEM"
6015 PRINT " G AAAA - RUN MEM"
6020 PRINT " S"CHR$(34)"FILE NAME"CHR$(34)".AAAA.BBBB - SAVE MEM"
6025 PRINT " L"CHR$(34)"FILE NAME"CHR$(34)" OR JUST L - LOAD MEM"
6030 PRINT " ;A=AA OR ;X=AA OR ;Y=AA - ALTER REGS"
6035 PRINT " X"TAB(26)"- EXIT":PRINT " R"TAB(26)"- DISPLAY REGS"
6040 PRINT"NOTE- ALL SPACES AND FULL STOPS MUST BE INCLUDED AS ABOVE."
6050 PRINT"ALL NUMBERS MUST BE IN HEX AND OF THE LENGTH SHOWN."
6060 PRINT:GOTO 200

```

5100-5170 Decodes command and alters the required register with the new data.

6000-6060 Displays the syntax for all the commands.

PCNProgramCards

Basic Search

Card 1 of 1

8339BS1/1

BBCA/B BBC Basic

Application:Utility Author:Steven McLean

```

10MODE 7:VDU14:@%=5:PROCin
20A%=&B3:P%=(USR(&FFF4)AND&FFFF00)/&100:N%=P%:C%=0
30REPEAT
40IF ?N%=&D:IFN%?1=&FF:C%=1:GOTO 80
50IF ?N%=&D:L%=(N%?1)*256+(N%?2):N%=N%+4:B%=0
60IF?N%=Q%:PROCout
70N%=N%+1
80UNTIL C%=1
90PRINT' 'CHR$131;"Search Complete.'"CHR$130;"Another search?";
100REPEAT A$=GET$:UNTIL INSTR("YyNn",A$)
110IF A$="Y" OR A$="y" RUN ELSE VDU 10,13,15:PAGE=P%:END
120DEFPROCin
130CLS:PRINT TAB(0,3)CHR$131"This routine will search for all"
140PRINT CHR$131;"referances to a goven string of"
150PRINT CHR$131;"characters.'"CHR$131;"keywords are ignored."
160PRINTTAB(0,10)CHR$130;:INPUT"Enter string: " Q$
170S%=LEN(Q$):Q%=ASC(Q$)
180ENDPROC
190DEFPROCout
200IF LEFT$(N%,S%)=Q$:IF B%=0:PRINT'L%':B%=1
210IF LEFT$(N%,S%)=Q$:IF B%>0:PRINT TAB(7,VPOS) (" ;B% ; ")":B%=B%+1:N%=N%+S%-1
220ENDPROC

```

10	Set graphics and page modes, numeric field width, input string.	50	L%=line number, set N% to first byte of line.	90-110	If another search required then RUN else line feed, page mode off, return to default page.
20	Find default page (P%), initialise byte in director (N%=P%) and end flag (C%).	60	If this byte = first byte of string then PROCout	120-180	Input required string.
30	Main loop	70	Next byte.	190-220	If matching string is found, print line number. Further matches update the number of occurrences.
40	Check for end of program marker.	80	Until end of program found (line 60).		

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```
L=VAL (MID$(B$, (T*4)+1, 3))
```

```
B$=B$+C$+D$
```

```
N=39
```

```
PRINT CHR$(L-N)
```

```
NEXT T
```

```
B$="146211031664122615911239"
```

```
N=VAL (MID$(A$, 8, 2))
```

```
A$=STR$(SQR(N))
```

```
C$="179313071573127B"
```

```
D$="1119316561201"
```

```
FOR T=0 TO 13
```


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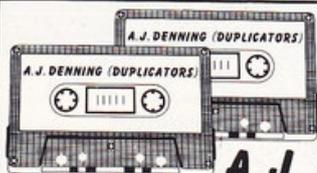
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Hairy offer



Not to be outdone by Softek's £1,000 prize (Issue 35), Twig Systems is offering £10,000 to the winner of its 'Monster Challenge'.

All you have to do is risk permanent brain damage solving six games to get to the final challenge in London, which may be televised. Dave Lee Travis, the Hairy Monster, involved in the development of the challenge, comments: 'These games will have people beating their heads on the floor with frustration.'

Rumours that the finals will be held in padded cells are completely unfounded.

Look ahead

The Acorn Electron may have made a slow start but you have to take your hat off to the speed and efficiency of user friendly company Orbit.

With Electrons apparently as rare as a win over the All Blacks, Orbit has already established the Independent National user Group for the Electron. It plans a monthly magazine and a free cassette with eight programs.

It may strike you as premature or even an act of faith to join a user group before you have the machine. But as it's Acorn, you know it makes sense.

NEXT WEEK

Peripherals PCN's *Micro-paedia pull-out* gives you a *Buyer's Guide to add-ons*.

Hardware *The Spectrum's US cousin, the Timex/Sinclair 2068, gets a UK road test.*

Software *Pro-Tests of a music package for the BBC, a database manager for the Commodore*

Newbrain

64, and educational software for the Spectrum.

Part three of a series that shows you how to write-it-yourself for the micro that found a Dutch uncle.

Gameplay

Reviews of games for the Dragon 32, Vic 20, Spectrum and Atari.

SPANTAX ERRORS

A hash of it

If you've tried opening hashes in the first part of our Newbrain WP article, issue 38, you'll have discovered that the line of program under the heading Screens on page 31 should read: OPEN 1.01, L50.

PAL2000
by Mollusc



PCN DATELINES

PCN Datelines keeps you in touch with up-coming events. Make sure you enter them in your diary.

Organisers who would like details of coming events included in

PCN Datelines should send the information at least one month before the event. Write to PCN Datelines, Personal Computer News, 62 Oxford Street, London W1A 2HG.

UK EVENTS

Event	Dates	Venue	Organisers
Ninth ZX Microfair	December 3-4	Alexandra Pavilion, Alexandra Palace, London N22	ZX Microfair, 01-801 9172
BBC Micro User Show	December 9-11	Westminster Exhibition Centre	Database Publications, 061-456-8383
Your Computer Christmas Fair	December 15-18	Wembley Conference Centre	Reed Exhibitions, 01-643 8040
Which Computer? Show	January 17-20	NEC, Birmingham	Clapp & Poliak Europe Ltd., 01-747 3131
Northern Home Entertainment Show	January 19-22	Excelsior Hotel, Manchester Airport	Stamley Wire Advertising Ltd., 01-253 6637
Acorn Education Exhibition	January 25-27	Central Hall, Westminster	Computer Marketplace (Exhibitions) Ltd, 01-930 1612
Communications & Computer Systems Fair — CABLES	February 2-4	Pontin's, Prestatyn, Wales	Pontin's Ltd., 07456 2267
LET '84	February 13-15	Heathrow Penta Hotel	Anthony Farrar, 0923 774262
International Home Computers, Video Games & Software Exhibition	February 13-15	Heathrow Penta	Wheatland Journals Ltd., 0923 774262
Information Technology & Office Automation Exhibition and Conference	February 21-24	Barbican Centre, London EC1	B.E.D. Exhibitions Ltd., 01-647 1001
OEM Only Conference	March 7	Hilton Hotel, London W1	Tom Lewis, 01-994 6477
Computer Trade Show	March 13-15	Wembley Conference Centre, Middlesex	Reed Exhibitions, 01-643 8040
Essex Apple Village	March 25-28	Festival Hall, Basildon, Essex	Database Publications, 061-456 8383

OVERSEAS EVENTS

Event	Dates	Venue	Organisers
Computer Indonesia	Nov 22-25	Jakarta	Overseas Exhibition Services Ltd., 01-486 1951
Computer Dealers Exhibition	November 28-Dec 2	Las Vegas, USA	Interface Group Conference & Exposition Management, 160 Speen St., Framingham, MA 01701, USA
Personal Business Computer Show	February 29-March 3	Hong Kong	Overseas Exhibition Services Ltd., 01-486 1951

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Special Features for the BBC

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Power Supply Power is taken from the external power outlet socket on the BBC computer. If your computer is not fitted with this socket a suitable power supply is available from us.

Special Features for the NASCOM

Microsoft Basic Upgrade Kit Enables you to read and write files from BASIC using PRINT and INPUT statements - no more PEEKS and POKES! Supplied on a Hobbit cassette.

Operating system available in 2 x 2708 or 1 x 2716.

Normal address D000 - other addresses are available on request at no extra charge.

If you want to know more about the Hobbit before you make up your mind send to the address below for more details, or order the manual and see just how sophisticated the Hobbit really is.

If you have a different make of computer, but are interested in the Hobbit system, send us a stamped addressed envelope and details of your computer so that we can send you advance information of new products when they become available.



Available from most good computer shops or direct from:- IKON COMPUTER PRODUCTS, KILN LAKE, LAUGHARNE, DYFED.
Tel. 099 421 515. BBC Hobbit £135.00 + £3.00 p&p. BBC Second drive £120.00 + £3.00 p&p. Zero Memory Option £25.00 (£18.00 if ordered with the Hobbit). Power Supply £12.00. Manual (ordered separately) £1.50 (No VAT; refundable on purchase of Hobbit). Nascom Hobbit (unboxed) £120.00. Nascom second drive £94.00. Basic Upgrade Kit £10.00. Box of 6 cassettes £17.50. Cleaning cassette £3.50. Please add VAT at the current rate to the above prices.
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