Eureka

The magazine for members of

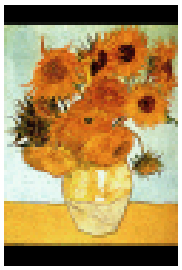
The ARM Club

Adding ARM Linux to RISC OS

Putting your holiday pictures on CD

Textease Database & free educational resources

ArtWorks TextArea module



Art in the National Curriculum

Issue 38 — Summer 2001

Can I Junk My Windows PC?

Will Wakefield this month see the end of the wait for the new computer promised at the Yorkshire show a year ago? And will its arrival end the need for the second machine that sits on my desk, a Windows PC that I reluctantly bought last year from sheer necessity?

It's hard to stop punning about something called Omega, although rather than being the end of anything it is being seen as the possible start of a new phase after the one which ended two and a half years ago with the still birth of Phoebe quickly followed by the death of Acorn. It's a tribute to the quality of the RISC OS machines that so many of us are still using them and have kept aging computers over a time which has seen many new features being added to Windows computers.

However, during the last couple of years an uncomfortably large proportion of RISC OS users have gone over to Windows machines, either as replacements or additions to their Acorns. For many of us getting to know Windows has meant getting to loathe this cumbersome, bug-ridden, operating system where freezes are a daily occurrence and periodic reinstallation is considered a normal necessity.

My big hope is that Omega or one of its promised rivals will eventually be able to run all Windows programs and do so better than the existing PC cards can. Omega is to have USB ports but will there be the drivers for the digital camera and scanner which I now have to connect to my unloved Wintel computer?

To fully recapture the Acorn market a computer will need to be able to completely replace a PC. To capture any significant part of the PC market it will be even more necessary to be able to run the existing Windows programs and hardware while offering the alternative of RISC OS simplicity to win over the new users.

Peter Jennings

All opinions expressed in Eureka are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Club or its Committee members and officers.

CONTENTS

4 EasyFont Pro CD upgrade
New features from a new supplier for the popular font management system.

7 The RISC OS 2001 Show
The Club announces the dates and a new venue.

8 See you at the shows
Coming soon at Wakefield and in Holland.

9 The SouthEast Show
Full details of the event, now being held in Luton.

10 Art in the National Curriculum
A wide ranging CD of resources for use at all levels.

14 Living with a PC: good & bad
Comparisions between RISC OS and Windows and suggestions for improvements.

18 Acorn Arena
The latest on the games scene and the return of some old favourites.

25 The DOUBLECROSS Puzzle
Pit your wits to fill the grid.

26 Editing Eureka
How the articles are an exact fit for the pages and other secrets you've never suspected.

33 Odd ode: to a mouse
Our new feature introducing a spot of culture among the technology.

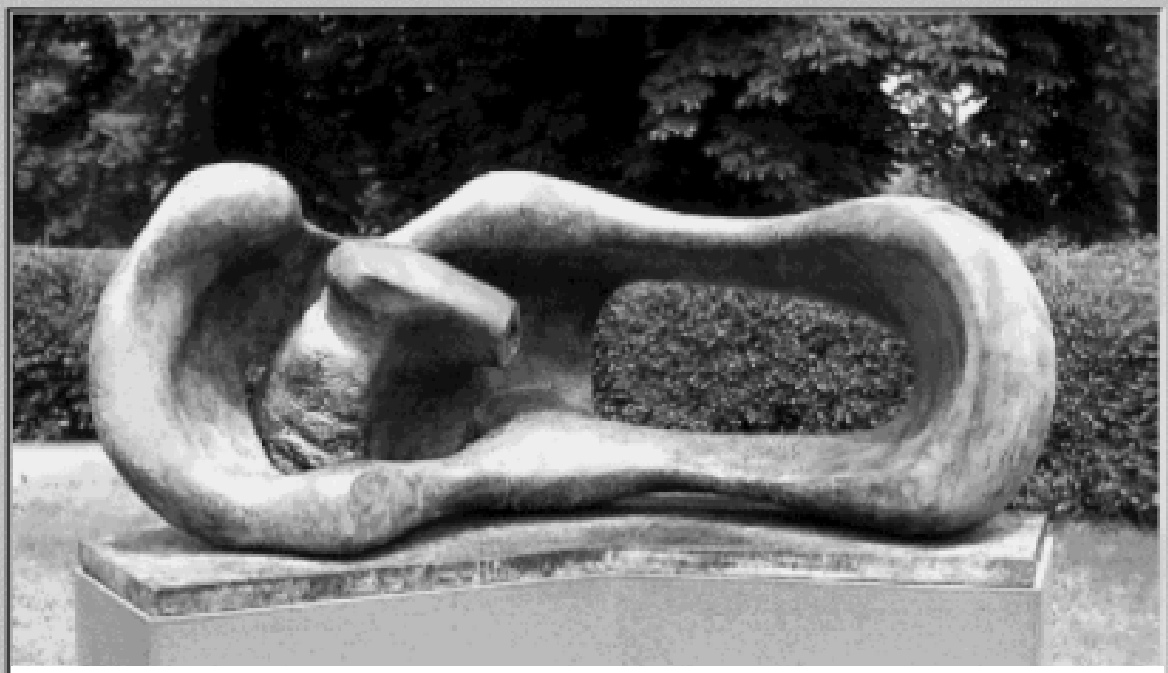
34 Rhyme & Analogy
Volume B of the Activity Software from Sherston and the Oxford Reading Tree.

38 Rilla & Matthew living with a PC
More experiences of Windows pains and how the problems were overcome.

42 Textease Database
The trio of programs in Textease Studio is completed with a database which can also be bought separately.

46 National Curriculum Resources
Free packs containing more than 80 exercises for Key Stages one to four which come with Textease products.

Reclining Mother and Child - Henry Moore



Art in The National Curriculum — page 10

48 ArtWorks TextArea module
Add words to ArtWorks the (very) quick and easy way.

50 Putting your holiday photos on CD
All the details you need to prepare your photographs, whether digital or on film, to go on CD-ROM.

61 The DOUBLECROSS solution
How the puzzle grid should look.

62 The RISC OS Show Story
The concluding part of how the big show was organised tells of the last few frantic weeks of activity.

66 Gill's Decisive Journal
Make up your mind to read it now!

74 Anyone's guide to ARM Linux
How it could make a useful addition to RISC OS.

78 You've asked...
A few of the stream of questions sent to and answered by the Club's Technical Help Service team.

80 Club Contacts
Who and how to get in touch with for queries and Club services.

EasyFont Pro CD Upgrade

Peter Jennings upgrades the old favourite font management system from Fabis, now given new life with some new features after being taken over by iSV.

EasyFont, which first appeared in 1994, is one of those programs which have long been a key feature of the Acorn scene, regularly updated and improved in a succession of upgrades. It orginally came from Fabis and its quality ensured that it survived that company's demise two years ago, when it was taken over by iSV. Now EasyFont Pro, as it became in 1997, has appeared on CD-ROM, in a new version 5.04, with a new logo and icons.

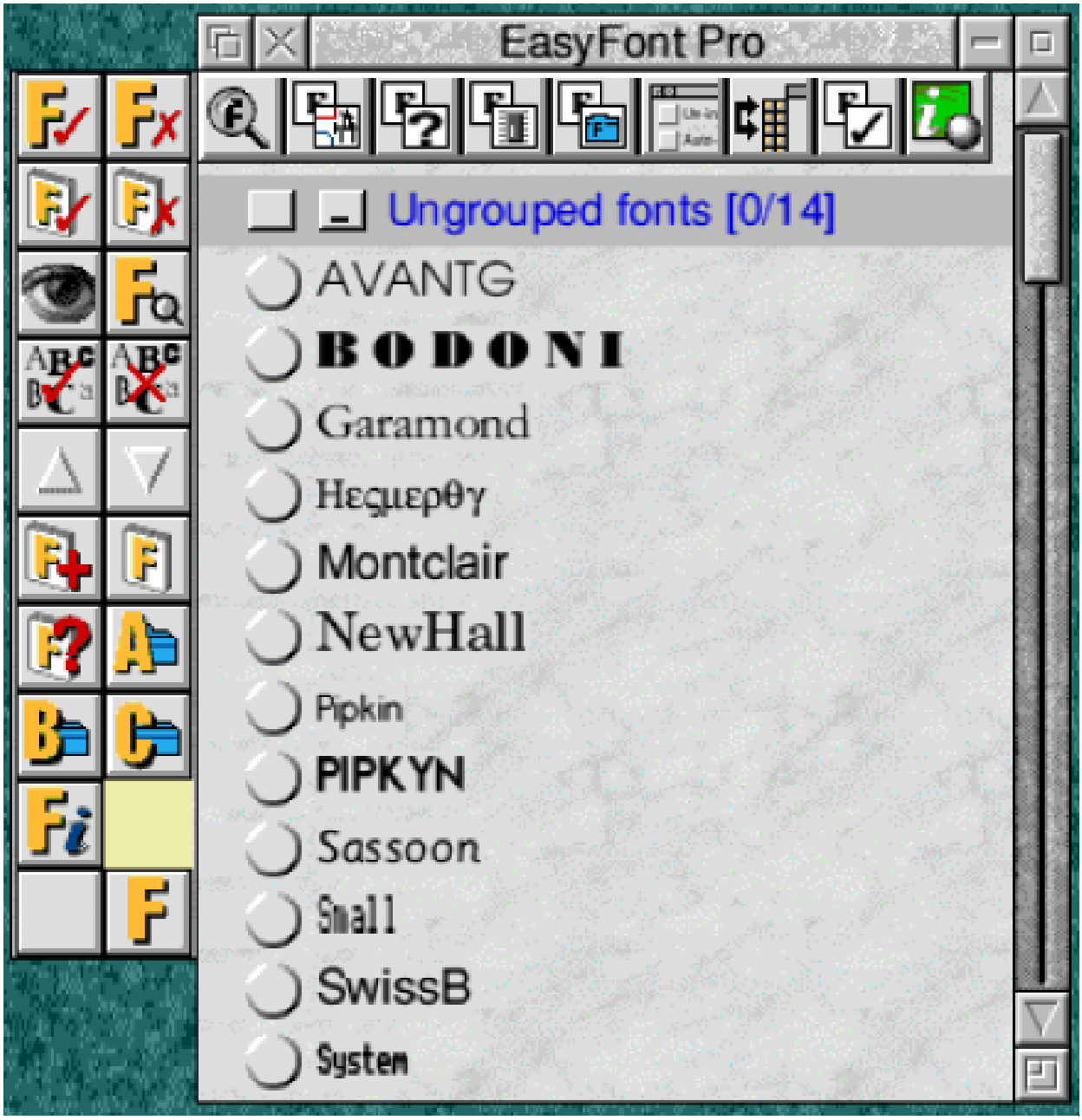
A new version with new icons

The award-winning program has had three months' work done on it to give it improved speed and reliability while using less memory.

Those already familiar with earlier versions will know that it allows fonts to be stored, saving up to 30% of disc space, or accessed from other sources, with names displayed in their own typefaces and switched on with a mouse click. If you are going to work with an existing document the program will detect and turn on the fonts you need simply by dragging the file into EasyFont.

There are fuller details of the earlier features in a review of the first 'Professional' version of EasyFont which appeared in Eureka 21 (the Spring 97 issue).

The first noticeable difference in the new version, apart from the



The new top toolbar gives access to the more advanced features

progression from disc to CD, is the lack of any printed documentation. The previous comb-bound manual and quick reference card have been replaced by a rewritten manual using iSV's familiar Inform document reader program. This again is almost inevitable, as the convenience of the printed version is traded for the cheaper option which helps to keep down the price to what is an extremely low level — around a quarter of the original cost!

The CD offers the options to install either a new blank version of Easy Font, 1MB in size; an upgrade of 0.2MB (keeping your original fonts) or a new version plus fonts at 24MB.

The supplied fonts are a very useful collection of more than 2,000 typefaces in 160 families, classified (with numbers of font families) as: Decorative (29), Designer (9), Digital (6), Eastern (2), Gothic (25), Open Face (10), Sans Serif (19), Script (12), Serif (32), Symbolic (6), Uncial (6) and Western (4).

When you start using the program you find a new top toolbar with icons to provide access to the more advanced features. One of these is the ability to test a complete font family's integrity by checking every character in every weight for errors.

An irritating anti-piracy measure of earlier versions, requiring the original disc to be inserted every few months, has happily gone.

One big advantage of having a program reissued on CD is the vast amount of empty space it leaves to be filled with whatever bonus programs the company may be generous enough to offer.

In this case we are given: DrawWorks SE, Dr Fonty (with PostScript font export), Font Name and iDesigner, all complete with their electronic manuals. They may not be the latest versions but all are very usable.

There is also a full copy of the iSV website, as at 25 August 2000, making a total CD content of more than 120MB.

If you use fonts you will find EasyFont Pro a very useful accessory at a very modest price. I regard it as an essential component on my icon bar.

EasyFont Pro CD-ROM
Price: £15
Site licence: £30
Upgrade: £10 (with return of original disc)
All plus £1.50 post and packing
Supplier: iSV Products
86 Turnberry, Home Farm,
Bracknell, Berks RG12 8ZH
Tel: 01344 455769
Email: atimbrell@aol.com
Web: isvproducts.co.uk

RISC OS 2001 SHOW

The ARM Club, in conjunction with ROUGOL and SASAUG, are proud to announce that the two-day RISC OS 2001 Show will take place on the weekend of 20th and 21st of October.

The venue will be the Blue Mountain Conference Centre at Binfield, Bracknell. The venue offers excellent road and rail links, being only five minutes from Junction 10 of the M4 and with fast trains from Paddington taking only 30 minutes. A shuttle bus service will operate from Reading Station.

The conference centre features a number of interconnected rooms giving greater space and flexibility for exhibitors and visitors. A dedicated theatre will allow the usual popular presentations to take place.

Epsom, the venue for the last two years, has increased its price substantially and the move to Bracknell allows stand prices to be reduced relative to last year, ensuring more exhibitors, larger stands and an even better show.

More details will be announced shortly.

Put it in your diary now:

RISC OS 2001 Show
20th and 21st of October
Blue Mountain Conference Centre
Binfield, Bracknell, Berkshire

More show dates on the next two pages.

See you at the Shows...

WAKEFIELD 2001

Saturday 19th May 10am to 5.30pm and Sunday 20th May 10am to 4pm
Thornes Park Athletics Stadium, Horbury Road, Wakefield.

Advance tickets, allowing entry on both days, cost £2.50 for adults. Juniors aged up to16 pay £1.50, while Children under 6 are admitted free. On the door prices are £4 for Adults and £2.50 for Foundation (on production of a membership card), OAPs and Juniors aged up to 16. Members of the Wakefield Acorn Computer (User) Group and ***The ARM Club*** can gain admittance on the Sunday for the reduced price of £2.50 on production of their membership card.

Advance ticket orders should be sent to: Show 2001, 95 Cumbrian Way, Lupset Park, Wakefield WF2 8JT. Please make Cheques or Postal orders payable to "WACG Show". Sorry we cannot accept Credit or Debit Cards.

RISC OS Expo 2001 (Holland)

Saturday, June 16th 10am to 5pm
Expo and Concorde Hall, Hotel Mercure, Buizerdlaan 10, Nieuwegein (near the city of Utrecht).

Dutch, German and British exhibitors will be attending and there will be theatre presentations

Admission: Big Ben Club members free, non-members Dfl 15.00.

For more information see the organisers' Web site: www.bigbenclub.nl/

Supporting RISC OS users in SE England

SATURDAY 21st JULY 2001

Putteridge Recreation Centre
Stopsley, Luton
Bedfordshire

Doors open from 10am until 4.30pm

Adults £3 / ARM Club or Foundation £2
Children under 16 FREE (accompanied by an adult)
[Pay on door]

- » Latest products
- » Special show discounts
- » Software to be won!
- » Theatre presentations
- » Hobbyist/Games area
- » Meet fellow enthusiasts

FREE bus shuttle from Luton Parkway train station

Phone: (01935) 413170 **Fax: (01935) 413170**
Email: acornshow@argonet.co.uk

http://www.argonet.co.uk/acornshow

Art In The National Curriculum

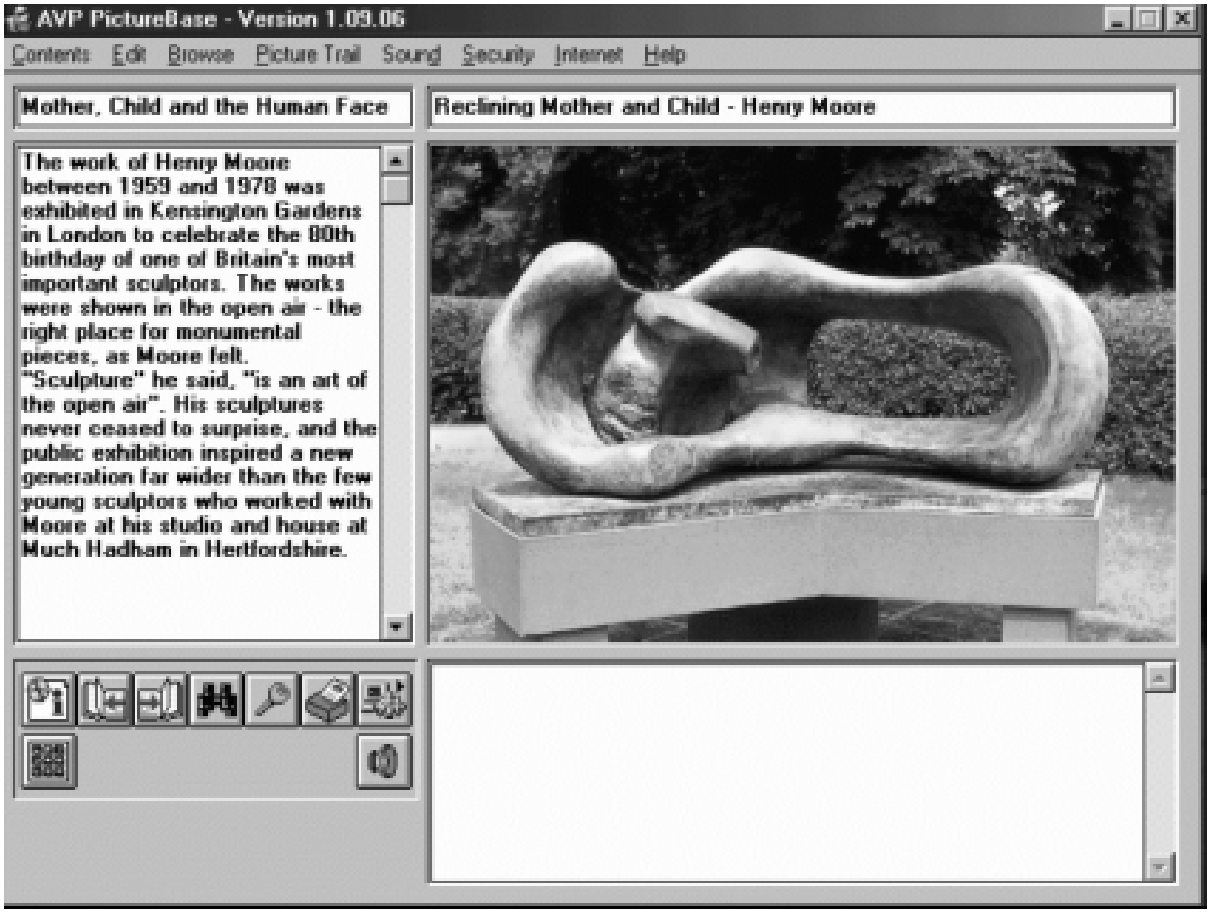
Christopher Jarman admires an art collection ranging from Greek pottery painting to modern sculpture, all encompassed by the wide ranging National Curriculum.

Installing the Picture Base program on the Acorn under RISC OS 4 was a bit fiddly and took about five minutes to establish, compared with the autorun immediacy of the PC installation. Then it failed to work, so I had to take the CD-ROM out of my Risc PC and put it into my PC in order to review it.

No wonder it took me so long to get down to it! (This is not a criticism of the CD-ROM but a comment upon how far out of the mainstream our favourite operating system has drifted. However loyal one may wish to be, it is not really sensible to keep on pretending we have not got left behind.)

The CD itself is a well thought-out resource with a great deal of interesting and relevant information. The pictures are taken from less well-known sources than the usual TV program or art book, and so present a freshness which somehow has more impact because of this. The texts accompanying both still and video pictures are read by a man and a woman — the woman sounds suspiciously like Sister Wendy! — and are clear and easy to listen to.

I could not find any indication on the CD or its box whether it is aimed at any particular Key Stage. In the AVP catalogue it states Key Stage 1-3. I suspect this is deliberate, because educationally it could be used at any age or stage. It might help sales to nervous teachers if this was made more explicit. I doubt whether many Infant schools would buy something that did not mention infants on the box and yet this CD contains enough variety of information at different levels to satisfy the interests of five to 80 year olds. It is available to work on Acorn, PC and Apple.



The National Curriculum Art is covered by eight Topics in the program offered. These are:

1. Insect and jungles
2. Costumes and Clothes
3. Mother, Child and the Human Face
4. Animals and Plants in Art
5. Flowers in Art and Textiles
6. Nature in Art
7. Egyptian, Greek and Assyrian Style
8. Sculpture.

Each topic contains 30 pictures with text.

If this list strikes you as somewhat arbitrary, then that is the National Curriculum for you! As the Americans would say “So what else is new?” Nevertheless, within the silly confines of the whole Nat Curriculum Concept this list provides a goldmine of stimulus and data.

On the PC at least, it opens with a nice lady telling you how to work everything and what the Help menu means. I think pupils would find this very reassuring and it adds value to the navigation of the CD as quite a

variety of media approaches are offered. The normal window consists of four compartments with a text area, a picture area, a small area for working buttons and a blank section for making and saving your own notes.

Clicking on the picture screen enlarges it to take up the whole window. Another click and the working window is restored. Nothing unusual here, but it is quick, easy and it works.

Quite wisely the program is designed to be viewed on a 800 by 600 screen which is the size of most school screens. If you want full-screen pictures then you need to use a 640 x 480 screen. I certainly found it beneficial to change down from my normal 1024 x 768 size.

Good library resources

To use this CD successfully, a teacher would need to know the contents well and to be able to refer pupils to it. There is not a teaching program on the disc. It is strictly a set of good library resources covering a wide area of art.

There are about 240 illustrations with sound and text and a number of videos. Most of the illustrations are extremely informative and some are quite unusual and non cliche. My only mild criticism is that where giant Egyptian statues are shown, a human figure or two would have helped to show the scale. It is no use the commentary saying “These giant figures” and then showing a photo which could be six inches tall!

The images of the human face are particularly appealing and will interest schoolchildren. There are pictures ranging from early icons to

Elizabeth Frink's sculpture which are well chosen.

As well as providing substance for the historical study of art, there are plenty of pictures which could be used for design ideas and inspirational starting points.

Although I enjoyed the Insects and Jungle module, which heads the content list, I am not sure at what point this item connects with Art in the National Curriculum. The text seemed to be much more related to Geography and Biology. However, inspiration for artistic endeavour can be found everywhere and so no real complaints there.

Art in the National Curriculum
Price: £69 +VAT
(with site licence for five users)
Supplier: AVP
School Hill Centre
Chepstow
Monmouthshire
NP6 5PH
Tel: 01291 625439
Fax: 01291 629671
Email: info@avp.co.uk
Web: www.avp.co.uk

Living With A PC: Good & Bad Bits

It was Peter Jennings's Editorial in the last issue of Eureka which set me thinking or, at least, set me trying to bring some order into what had previously been chaotic thoughts.

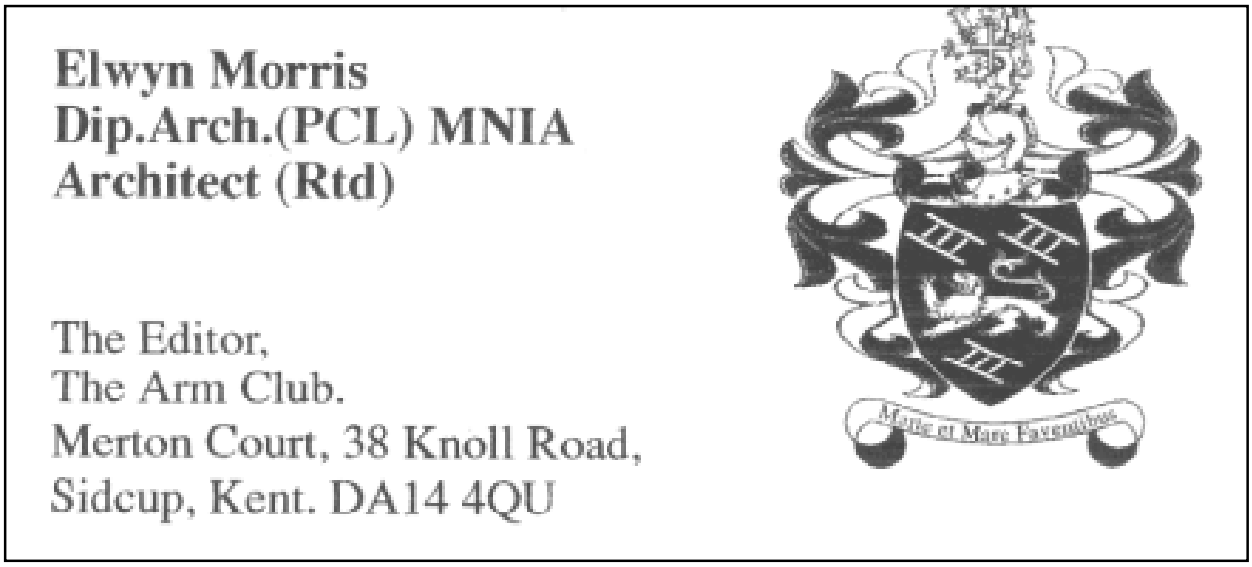
Elwyn Morris gives his very personal views on how Windows and RISC OS machines compare and suggests some improvements he'd like to see.

Let me, for simplicity, call a computer which runs under RISC OS 3 or 4 an Acorn machine, a computer which runs Microsoft (Mickeysoft) Windows a Windoze machine. Then nobody gets muddled up with the words, with PC meaning personal computer but not including an Acorn machine which, to most these days, is something else. Perhaps a washing machine? As such, pretty useless, of course.

Firstly, Acorn programs are small, usually much cheaper than a Windoze program, less difficult to use or comprehend. The number of key presses required to carry out similar actions are also fewer in number. Most important of all, no programs forceably invade the operating system and mess it about for their own ends, often to the detriment of the comfortable running of other programs. Lastly on this, an Acorn CD-ROM behaves very much like a glorified floppy and does not have to have huge amounts of itself copied to the hard disc nor does it again muck up the operating system's programs. On matters of stability, we all seem to know that an Acorn computer crashes once in a blue moon and a Windoze machine does similar daily, even hourly. Yet this, and all of the above, is not made enough of. Such advantages to business or home user alike are underplayed. Acorn was never any good at publicity.

The programs

I am an architect so I prefer vector based drawing tools to bitmap ones. Having an eye for the visual detail, I like my text to be properly kerned,



The crest on a letterhead — easy to add with Fireworkz

dithered, anti-aliased. Windoze programs have addressed this only recently. Further, being both elderly, (an arm chair is more comfortable than even the best high backed computer chair) and having a photographic style of mind absorption, manuals are preferred to on-screen help. In all this, I am not alone. Others are like me. Again, Acorn programs fill these needs better than do Windoze ones and, again, nobody seems to go out and sell these facts.

Taking the programs one stage further, those for the Acorn market avoid the masses of bells and whistles, 99% unused, which Windoze ones throw in. They are, nevertheless, in spite of this, usually surprisingly more versatile than their Windoze opposite numbers. I, in fact, use only four, plus one or two freebies, which nearly bring my oldish Risc PC 7000 (+StrongArm) up to RISC OS 4 or Windows 98 standards.

Yet, in the programs I use, I would like to see a few additions and improvements. Then they should go out with guns blazing and publicity stunts as yet undreamt of to clobber the Windoze competition. Let me list them. Perhaps you would like to suggest something of this to their programmers?

Fireworkz: So versatile that I use it for everything text-based from letter writing and spreadsheets to heavily

text oriented database work (where I use the spreadsheet facility which, unlike Excel, allows for huge paragraphs of text in any cell). Also, a reasonable amount of graphic work can be incorporated and can even be referenced (as the coat of arms on my letterhead) long before Ovation followed suit. I do not think any Windoze word processor allows such, any more than allowing for a 'squeak' whenever a word is typed wrongly. This last, for me, is an essential. I know a lot of people using Word in any of its multitude of manifestations secretly would prefer to have this facility also. Nevertheless, I would like to be able to rotate text. Then it would be perfect.

Vector: There is a small 'hatch' program which can work with Draw and Draw Plus but rather unhappily. A facility to hatch (fill) objects would be such a boon. As also would an ability to get lettering to follow a curved line or circle —although again there are separate programs which will do this. I produce a lot of what I call 'hand out' sheets, using this program, for the various lecture courses I run part time for the University of Essex, WEA, WI, etc. People are astonished at the apparent versatility of whatever program I use, ask what it is and show sorrow when it is one that will not run on their Windoze machines.

Ovation Pro: I would willingly pay £30 plus or minus for a proper printed manual of the latest version of this program. I detest on-line help menus, have not got the hang of printing out the manual on the latest CD in anything like sensible paper-saving form and would immediately switch from using Impression Publisher if such were available. So, outdated and no longer supported as it is, I use Publisher and find it more friendly and more easily manipulated than any other when a lot of graphics need to be incorporated.

R-Comp's Internet suite: Once it is up and running it is much easier to use, even quicker to operate, than anything on the Windoze machines. I have both an Acorn and a Windoze computer sitting side by side. Both are connected to the same modem. From immediate preference I turn on the Acorn machine if I want to send an email. Yet the loading, setting up, of the Acorn program and connection to

an ISP is far more difficult than for Windoze ones, where this is practically automatic.Why cannot those for the Acorn be as simple to install likewise? (I have not migrated up to the latest R-Comp programs because the doing of it terrifies me!)

Lastly, SparkFS and ArcFS beat anything that one seems to be able to use easily on a Windoze machine.

Finally, a bit of praise for the freebies. Squash, Alarm and ChangeFSI show (like Draw and Edit) that those produced by Acorn itself beat anything Mickeysoft is capable of. Further, third-parties' Lunch, as a screen saver, Longfiles, TextnFind, Memnow, FastSpool help to make the computer far more friendly.

I use little else. I would like to be able to access the clipboard as is the norm on a Windoze machine. Perhaps, also, sometimes I would like something similar to the inbuilt program or subject finder within Windows 98. But then programs are so split up, convoluted, self-writing in that format that such is essential. (Actually TextnFind does this on my Acorn, does it not?) I sometimes turn Bubblehelp on, or load Flashfind if I need the cursor to flash. TextFind has its uses if one is in Edit or can re-save into that form for a particular purpose. That is about it.

I am no public relations expert nor an advertisement boffin, as Acorn itself wasn't. Yet, if only somebody, somewhere, could either spend a bit of money employing such or spend a bit of time thinking up some advertising blurb (which would not be as nearly untrue as many adverts), we might revive and get somewhere! We might even return the words PC to meaning just that: a Personal Computer.

Footnote: *After writing the above I had a Risc PC computer crash, of sorts, involving !Messenger Pro. R-Comp's Andrew Rawnsley answered the telephone when I rang and the problem was rectified within twenty minutes. Telephone anybody supplying Mickeysoft software and its copyists and most likely one gets recorded voices that give one a half hour run around, with no human at the end ever.*

ARM Arena

In his regular round up of the games scene Andrew Weston looks at the latest releases and finds some old favourites making a comeback.

The past few months has seen a couple of Acorn shows with which new game releases are often associated and the last two have been no exception. Since last time, there has also been plenty of news regarding the progress of new games in development from Artex and others. So, although we are not seeing the continual stream of releases that the PC world enjoys, there should be something this time to interest most of us.

Show news

Readers of the last column may remember that the classic 3D aerial combat game Starfighter 3000 has been under redevelopment for several months in order to make the game compatible with the latest generation of StrongARM and RISC OS 4 computers. This work eventually resulted in an official re-release at The ARM Club's Midlands Show in November and also boasts various other enhancements such as redefinable keys and improved graphics resolution. The game has been published by iSV Products and Nathan Atkinson of VOTI who coordinated the project has also arranged for three other major games to be included on the CD!

These are the all-time classic Elite, Air Supremacy (one of the small number of 32-bit titles that Superior Software published in the early '90s) and the Elite-style 2D-based game, Sunburst, by VOTI which has been praised for a number things, especially its depth.

At only £16.50 this is surely a bargain for anybody who would like to play Starfighter on his/her high-spec RISC OS machine or who would like to play one or two of the others even.

The recent Acorn Southwest show was marked for gaming fans by the release of another compilation CD, this time by R-Comp Interactive. Two games released in the early to mid-90's by Krisalis and developed originally by the Bitmap Brothers games team were being sold individually for £10 or together for £15.

A desert scene from VOTI's 'Eat My Dust' showing their new Egyptian graphics.

The two titles, Gods and Speedball2 have been specially updated for the latest RISC OS machines and have apparently been adjusted to run at the correct speed. Gods was a popular platform game released across several computer platforms and involves puzzle solving and combat set in an ancient civilisation. Speedball2 is a futuristic sports game and to quote RCI: "This futuristic game provides both arcade and management modes. Players gain skills and abilities as they go, and various tournament and league modes are available".

So, with puzzle solving and fast action at a reasonable price, this should be a pleasant surprise for many gamers.

Artex news

Around Christmas time, Artex began their publicity drive for the real-time strategy game TEK that they have been developing since 1998. The story and details of the gameplay are covered in detail on Artex's website and in an Acorn User TEK special (January 2001) but briefly the game is set in the near future and the player takes control of a range of military units owned by a global company and must defend its production of a drug

—to which the population of the Earth is addicted —against a rival company.

The opposing side is controlled by the computer and significant work has gone into implementing artificial intelligence into the game to make the computer a worthy opponent. In fact, in another notable development, Artex has announced a collaboration with VOTI to work on producing network support for TEK and future games so that such games —and in the case of TEK, opposing sides — can be played across the Internet.

TEK will have at least 11 missions set among desert, jungle or ice-covered terrain and the series of missions follows the ever-intensifying struggle against the opposing side. A briefing is given before each mission which sets the scene and reveals the story with a couple of surprises along the way!

From the outset, Artex have wanted to achieve a standard of presentation that is seen among major native PC game titles and the planned quality of gameplay and graphics in TEK reflect how ambitious the project is.

TEK is planned to be released at the Wakefield show in May but I don't know if the network support will be added later or if its development will delay the release. TEK has taken far longer to develop than Artex intended, chiefly due to the ill-fated collaboration with Acorn in the early stages. Let's hope that Wakefield this year will eventually see the release of this long-anticipated game.

Artex's other main project, Iron Dignity, has been showing signs that it is nearing completion and a date for the release of the PC version has been set at Spring 2001 with a RISC OS version following, ideally, three months after this. Jan Klose of Artex has stated that this depends upon the PC version selling enough to fund the necessary work to port the relevant parts across to RISC OS (as presumably most work has been done on the PC) and upon there being sufficient demand —probably more than the current market would generate. As usual, therefore, we have to wait and see regarding this game and it will be interesting to see what Artex have to say if they can make the journey to Wakefield again this year.

TEK development screenshot showing military units and mouse-driven control panel

Another development with Iron Dignity is the reported closure of the PC publisher of the game from whom Artex receive their funding. This is likely to be a hindrance to Artex but as stated on the Acorn games sites, not likely to be a long term one due to the quality of the game and as such they are unlikely to have to wait for a long time for another publisher to make them an offer.

Artex have recently re-designed their Iron Dignity website to include pictures behind-the-scenes at the making of the promotional movie mentioned last time. Unfortunately, the movie is only really viewable on PCs due to software availability largely but the production of the movie with a large cast of actors and background settings can be seen from the shots which is testament to the resources that can today be provided

by a major PC-based games publisher.

Further details on the game and its progress are available on Artex's Iron Dignity website and Acorn Arcade.

EMD

Another on-going major games project for RISC OS is EMD, an overhead-view racing game similar to the well-known 'Micro-Machines' game of yesteryear. The latest news at the time of writing is that the graphics have been significantly improved by VOTI but they are still designing new tracks and are investigating the possibility of a pre-rendered introduction movie. A wide range of ordinary and bonus levels are promised in the game.

A target date for EMD's release hasn't yet been set as progress has to fit around the schedules of the development team who work on the game in their spare time. VOTI have enlisted the help of at least three people in addition to the main programmer, Owain Cole, for the purposes of EMD which shows their determination to make the game as good as possible.

ProAction CD

Shortly before Christmas, ProAction released a CD compilation containing most of Superior Software's 32-bit titles including those released by ProAction later on in the 1990's as conversions of 8-bit titles, which effectively extended Superior's range (even though Superior had stopped advertising at this point). The CD includes classic conversions of Repton 3, Hostages and The Last Ninja as well as later conversions from the BBC of Repton 1 and 2 and Ravenskull. Also included are Technodream (a conversion to one of the original 32-bit games released by the 4th Dimension —Nevryon) and Air Supremacy.

Certain problems have been reported however including compatibility with modern machines and certain games running too fast. ProAction have said that they will be releasing an update CD to fix some of these problems and that people who bought the first CD will automatically receive the second. For further ordering information I'm afraid email access will be essential as no contact address is given in the latest posting to comp.sys.acorn.announce and no

adverts appear in Acorn User. R-Comp have been distributors for ProAction in the past so they might be willing to help anybody without email access. Contact details are provided at the end.

For further information, people with web access who might like to look at Gareth Moore's 32-bit Acorn Gaming pages which keep detailed information on gaming development which other sites often miss.

Others

There have been certain less high-profile developments since the last column which are nevertheless worth mentioning. First up is Silverball2, the sequel to the pinball simulator of the same name by none other than the author of the classic, aforementioned, BBC game Repton 3! This game has been released on the 32-bit Acorn Gaming pages and is free so fans of this pursuit can now enjoy themselves on their Acorn machines!

Skullsoft, authors of the shareware adventure game Arya: The Dragons Quest and the shareware shoot 'em up Xenocide have finally released a beta-version of a sequel to Plig, mentioned in an earlier column. Plig2 is a puzzle game, like the original, and has 50 levels, a level designer and higher resolution graphics. The idea of a beta version is to generate feedback to identify bugs and possible areas for improvement so if you would like to test the game for Skullsoft you can visit their website and follow the links to the game. Feedback should be posted to chris@skullsoft.co.uk.

In addition to its inclusion on the Starfighter 3000 Other Worlds CD, the classic VOTI game Sunburst can now be bought online via the VOTI website. This is priced at £7.50, P&P included. Its reduction in price together with the great ease of buying gives everybody a new opportunity to enjoy this high quality space-epic.

Finally, in a brief posting to comp.sys.acorn.games, Paradise Software, creators of the budget games Inferno and Overload (released at Wakefield 2000) reminded us that they have another game in development. Called *Pocket Money*, Paradise hope to release it in time for Wakefield but we should bear in mind that their previous title,

Overload, took quite a long time to develop but nevertheless was well received by Acorn User's games column at the time. More details on all of Paradise's titles can be found on their website given below.

Next time

All being well, I hope to bring more news on most of the titles currently in development in the next column. By that time, I am hoping to have visited Wakefield and discovered any news available on games from VOTI, Paradise, Artex and maybe R-Comp have something up their sleeves as is often the case. Last year we saw titles from Paradise and R-Comp — perhaps this year will be even better!

If you do buy a game that you read about here then why not mention that you read about it in Eureka? I'm sure it will be beneficial to The ARM Club.

Whatever happens, I'll try to find out about it and bring it here anyway so I hope there's enough here to keep RISC OS gamers happy until next time.

Have fun!

ProAction:
Email David Bradforth
vikfan123@aol.com
ProAction products are now available through R-Comp Interactive

Starfighter 3000:
Official Pages
starfighter.acornarcade.com
iSV Products ATimbrell@aol.com
Tel: 01344 455769

Artex
www.artexsoft.com
www.iron-dignity.com

VOTI (Visions of the Impossible)
www.visionsoftheimpossible.co.uk
c/o Nathan Atkinson:
wrath.voti@ntlworld.com

R-Comp Interactive
Telephone: (+44) 01925 755043
Email: rci@rcomp.demon.co.uk

32-bit Acorn Gaming
www.acorn-gaming.org.uk

Skullsoft
www.skullsoft.co.uk

Paradise
www.paradise-uk.net

The Eureka *DOUBLECROSS* Puzzle

Solution on page 61

Devised by
Roger King

© ***Rex Puzzles***

Place the 44 letters shown below
into the grid to make valid words

A A A A A B B C C D D
E E E E I I I L L L M
N N O O O R R S S S S
S T T T U U U W Y Y Y

Editing Eureka

This article first appeared in RISCOS Ltd's Foundation RISC User magazine, with additional illustrations in colour.

Eureka's Editor, Peter Jennings, explains how the magazine is put together and reveals the secret of how the stories always fit exactly into the pages.

The membership of The ARM Club varies enormously from "techies" who make their living working with computers (now too often PCs) to newcomers with little or no technical knowledge. Eureka has to appeal to them all. Each issue is a mixture, with a high-tech article or two (often well above my head), reviews of anything new, easy-when-you-know-how tutorials which can point out short cuts which users of all levels may have missed and some lighter reading including a word game puzzle and some humorous musings. Regular features include: ARM Arena (games), Site Seeing (the Web), Technical Help answers (which have already been sent to the enquirers personally), Living With A PC (alongside your RISC OS computer), members' free ads, an Editorial (yawn), and Gill's Journal (provocative, philosophical, humorous and always very readable).

RISC OS computing is taken seriously but not solemnly and the aim is to be interesting and entertaining without being frivolous.

The main reason I joined The ARM Club was to get the magazine. When I say "get" I mean that I wanted to receive Eureka as a reader and not take it over, as the man who liked the shaver and bought the company did. My spare time was then happily occupied in editing a magazine for the adult education department of a local college and I had no intention of taking on anything else. I even became a contributor to Eureka by accident when I innocently entered a Club competition and designed a new

logo for it (the one used from 1994 to 1997). The prize was the first version of EasyFont, which was accompanied by a request from the Eureka Editor, Simon Burrows, that I should write a review of it! More reviews followed and, with the closure of the college magazine in a round of budget cuts, I was a sitting target to edit Eureka when Simon gave up the job in 1996.

I was very impressed with the magazine, which Simon had created without any previous journalistic experience, and was happy to continue his style for my first issue while I worked out my own way of doing it. This was partly to reassure the Club Committee with something familiar before the magazine's appearance altered! After that there were two visible changes, with a new cover design and a different page layout, and two less obvious ones: a switch from using Impression to Ovation Pro, which I much preferred and which has the big advantage of still being constantly upgraded, and a new printing firm to try to improve the reproduction of illustrations. The magazine is printed from *camera ready copy* which means that a complete master copy of the magazine is prepared and laser printed and then given to the printers to be photographed to make the printing plates. Inevitably fine detail is lost, even though the master copy may look all right. Our present printers do extra work on the illustrations, screening the graphics to improve them, but the results still vary from issue to issue.

Having spent five of my years in Fleet Street as a Picture Editor I am very conscious of picture quality and probably spend more time working on the illustrations than on the words. Pictures which look marvellous in colour all too often appear as featureless dark masses when reproduced in black and white. So the first thing to be done with an illustration, once it has been selected for use, is to laser print it in black and white the same size as it is to appear. The colours which will not be reproduced well can then be identified and changed to different shades or even completely different colours, which may look bizarre but render better in monochrome. The process is then repeated as many times as necessary to get the best possible black and white results. This

commonly takes several hours, which can extend to a whole afternoon, working on a single picture before it produces a reasonable looking black and white print-out. Then, despite the printers' best efforts, it still may not look as good as was hoped when it appears in the magazine.

The graphic which was the most difficult to convert was the recent advertisement for the RISC OS 2000 Show. The array of beautifully drawn translucent balloons, which looked marvellous in colour, lost most of their brilliant effect when reproduced in monochrome, with some of them disappearing completely.

Editing a magazine is a Forth Bridge type of job. Work on an issue begins as soon as the previous one has gone to the printers. A three month gap between issues may seem a long time and it is for a well-staffed commercial publication with a big editorial team. But Eureka has a one-man editorial department and is completely dependent on getting contributions from willing Club members.

The first two or three weeks are spent sending out complimentary copies to companies which have provided review copies of their products, seeking more software to review and soliciting articles on as wide a range of subjects as possible from members with the particular knowledge required to write them.

The magazine is prepared using two templates, a three-pager for the opening pages, comprising the editorial and the index, and a two-page one for the start of each article. These have two columns with the text styles ready set for the story. The master pages have to have the issue number and date updated in the footers for each issue but Ovation Pro adds and increments the page numbers automatically.

Eureka has 11 text styles, all using Trinity or Homerton ***(see opposite)***. The main text area uses *Body Text, 1st Par* which adds a drop cap, *Program* for programming lines and Web and email addresses, and *Cross Head.* Then there are: *Intro*, *Caption* for illustrations, *Product Inf* for the information box at the end of reviews, *Headline* which automatically capitalises the initial letter of each word, *Headline Caps* to capitalise

Page styles

SUBJECT

Headline Has Initial Caps

The first paragraph uses 1st Par style, which gives it a drop cap. The rest is in Body Text style, which is 11pt Trinity Medium.

This is a cross head

A cross head is a multi-purpose device which breaks up large areas of text to make them more readable, indicates paragraphs which may be of particular interest and can also be used to space out the article to fill the page.

Rem This is Program style.
It is also used for Web and email addresses.

This is Caption style for illustrations

This is Intro style. The introduction goes into this panel, with border at top and bottom, and is always three lines. It includes the name of the author.

Product Inf Style

Price:
Site licence:
Supplier:
Tel:
Fax:
Email:
Web:

letters which are not at the start of a word, such as 'RISC OS', *Subject* for a reversed colour (that is white text on black) tab over the headline for some regular series, such as the Editorial, and *Footer* for the template pages.

When a contribution for the magazine arrives, by email or snailmail, the text is dropped into the two-page 'StartStory' template, which automatically adds whatever extra pages are needed. The article is then spell checked and sub-edited, which means carefully reading and making any necessary corrections. The corrections can include missing words, grammatical errors and changes to conform with Eureka's editorial style (more about that later). After that, picture frames are drawn and the illustrations are dropped into the appropriate pages and, if the story is a review, the information box added at the end to give price and purchase details of the product.

So that's one story finished then? I'm afraid not. Stories never come ready-sized to fill an exact number of pages completely, which is how they always appear in Eureka. So how do we squeeze or stretch the story into shape? The easy way would be to cut bits out but that is never done. The secret is to use cross heads, new paragraphs and graphics. Adding a cross head or splitting a large chunks of text into two paragraphs each add a line and also help to make the page easier to read. Graphics can be added, removed, enlarged or made smaller to fill or reduce larger areas of space.

There is one more crafty move. If a paragraph ends with a single word (which may be caused by just one character making the penultimate line too long) the spaces between words and characters can be made smaller, to squeeze more onto a line, by setting the *tracking* to a negative number. This is often very useful when lines of programming have to be included and the odd character or two is pushed onto a second line. A larger positive number can also be used, to spread out the words to fill a line, but this is more often done by having the lines automatically *justified*, as is done in Eureka.

Finally, when everything fits into the template pages, the story is copied and pasted as a 'chapter' into the magazine itself. This ability to copy

and paste complete chapters is a fairly recent and very welcome upgrade to Ovation Pro. Previously it was necessary to add a blank page in the magazine, copy and paste the text and then copy and paste each graphic and other element, including the headline, intro and information box, separately for each subsequent page.

The cover, which has two colours (black and varying shades of green, orange, brown or blue for the spring, summer, autumn and winter issues respectively), is printed on a thicker, glossy paper. Each colour has to be printed separately so two copies of the cover are prepared for the printers, one with the black parts only and the other with the sections to be in colour (although both copies are actually in black, with the required ink colour pencilled on the back). They often go to the printers a few days before the body of the magazine as the covers have to be laid out to dry after each colour has been printed.

The week before the magazine goes to press a set of all the pages completed to date is printed and sent to Simon Burrows for proof reading. This is a valuable check which Simon does meticulously, spotting and correcting any misprints from a misplaced comma upwards and querying any wrong or doubtful facts which may have slipped through. You can be pretty certain that any errors which do appear in the published magazine are in last minute contributions which arrived too late for Simon to see.

At this time the complicated organisation of distribution begins to swing into action. Membership Secretary Rilla Patterson prints a set of address labels for all current members, sorted out by destinations in Britain and abroad because of the different postal rates, while Simon, in his official capacity as Treasurer, arranges payments for the printing, the big postage bill and the envelopes. Our printers are very reliable. The job is always completed within a week and they have on occasions worked on bank holidays and weekends to make sure we have Eureka in time for a forthcoming show. Immediately the magazines arrive from the printers they are collected by our despatch team for packing and posting. Sufficient copies are always printed to allow for parcels to be sent to the Secretary and Membership Secretary

to provide the extra copy which goes into all new membership packs. The remainders are then passed on to someone who can take them to the Club stand at the next show.

The magazine's editorial style was mentioned earlier. Every publication has to have a consistent style which includes always abbreviating a word in the same way. For example, Megabyte could be abbreviated as either MB (Eureka's style) or Mb. Neither is necessarily wrong but it can look odd if both versions are used indiscriminately in the same magazine (or worse still on the same page). Anyone who writes for Eureka can have a copy of its style sheet but no-one is expected to be able to adhere to it completely and it is part of a sub-editor's job (or the Editor's in this case) to make any changes necessary for uniformity.

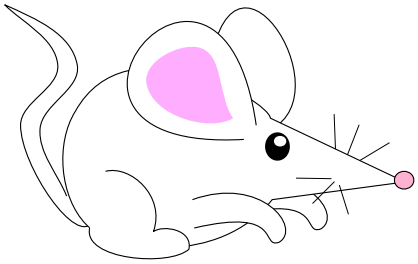
Eureka, being the service which all members receive, is probably the most appreciated of The ARM Club's various benefits of membership (with the free Technical Help Service probably coming a close second). It can be enjoyable and satisfying to write for the magazine and to know that your efforts are going to be widely read and appreciated. Lack of writing experience is no bar as friendly help and advice is freely available to potential contributors. Suggestions for possible articles are always welcome.

The Editor can be contacted by email to eureka@armclub.org.uk or by writing to: Peter Jennings, The ARM Club, Merton Court, 38 Knoll Road, Sidcup, Kent DA14 4QU.

You can see Foundation RISC User, where this article first appeared, in its Website edition at foundation.riscos.com/fru.htm.

It is a CD-ROM magazine sent quarterly to RISC OS Foundation members. Membership costs £30 + £5·25 VAT a year.

For enquiries:
The RISC OS Foundation
3 Clarendon Road
Cardiff CF23 9JD
Phone: 02920 492326
Fax: 02920 440071
Email: foundation@riscos.com



Odd Odes 1

To a Mouse

There's terrible grieving today in this house
Marking the end of my favourite mouse
Something was wrong, you could see how his cursor
Went lurching about, getting steadily worser
And when I gave him that final, firm click
All I had left was a small plastic brick
Leaving me sitting here mouseless and sad
Regretting the things that I've spilled on his pad
But I think all that's wrong is I've worn out his cable
I'll make him a new one some day if I'm able
And if I can do it then one day you'll see
The triumphant reunion of mousie and me.

by Robert Billing

Fancy yourself as a poet?If so, email your ode on any computer subject to The Editor eureka@armclub.org.uk *or post to the usual address on page 80.*

Di Hillage looks at the second CD in the series of stories which help develop reading, writing and rhyming skills

This is another of the Sherston CDs linked to the Oxford Reading Tree scheme and, as such, follows the standard set in other titles of the series, notably the later Talking Stories.

The activities in this volume, and in Volume A, are linked to six of Roderick Hunt's Rhyme and Analogy stories, published by Oxford University Press: That's Nothing!, Rockpool Rap, The King's Socks, Gran, Gran!, How to kick-start a Dragon and My Home.

For each title there are listening, reading and recognising and reading and writing activities.

The CDs are triple format with the Acorn version offering a full installation, which enables records to be kept for each pupils using the CD,

or the ability to run from the CD only. If the Sassoon font is not already among those in your system, then you will need to install this font first. Full details are given in the accompanying manual.

Once loaded, moving through the software is very straightforward. The Teacher's section allows for various options, including setting which of the three activities for each title are to be used and entering the names of pupils so that records can be kept. All instructions are spoken in real speech, not sythesised.

Each choice is explained to the user to justify a correct or wrong option, with reiteration of the onset and rhyme in each case.

The listening activities involve choosing items whose names rhyme. Sometimes the pupil is asked to choose the picture whose sound rhymes with a chosen item. In others it is necessary to choose two rhyming

Six stories with a choice of activities in each

Find the rhyming objects in the story of The King's Socks

pairs from six items which can be shown as pictures alone, as words or as a combination of both.

In all the activities the distracter items are carefully chosen to increase the difficulty of the puzzles in comparison to Volume A.

The reading and recognising puzzles include further matching of rhyming words and/or pictures and wordsearch puzzles. The reading and writing sections involve building up words from a selection of graphemes and some puzzles involving anagrams.

As we have come to expect from Sherston, this is an excellent resource for use at school or at home with Key Stage 1 pupils and particularly to provide reinforcement for those who have not taken readily to breaking words down into their different sounds (phonemes) in general classroom work during the literacy

Yes, cuff rhymes with puff

hour. In the classroom headphones will be essential to help the user focus on the task at hand.

There is a book of photocopiable masters available to accompany the CD at a cost of £29. The CD is £45 for a single copy with the customary sliding scale for further copies or network licences. Sherston also provide a home version with the same CD but without the associated classsroom resources and advice, for £29.95.

Oxford Reading Tree
Rhyme & Analogy Volume B
Price: £45 +VAT
Home version (without classroom resources): £29.95 +VAT
Supplier: Sherston Software Ltd
Angel House, Sherston
Malmesbury, Wilts SN16 0LH
Tel: 01666 843200
Fax: 01666 843216
Email: sales@sherston.co.uk
Web: www.sherston.com

Rilla And Matthew Living With A PC

The Great Dilemma has caught up with Rilla Paterson: getting through the Windows pain barrier. An ardent fan of her RISC machine, she is loathe to relinquish the familiar and reliable in favour of the mighty and, let's face it, inevitable Bill Gates. With a little help from her friends, or in this case son Matthew, she offers her solution.

While awaiting the new models, some RISC OS users have been forced to cope with the pain of Windows to get some now essential features our machines still lack.

Rilla:

The English language is a strange beast. There is usually a word for everything, and when we find there are not enough, we invent them. Thus, expressions like *video, spool, email, network and internet packet groper* enter the language with ease and within months the entire world is video-ing, spooling, emailing, networking, pinging and ponging as though these activities have been part of our culture for centuries.

There is, however, no word for grown-up children. *Offspring*? A bit pompous. *Fruit-of-the-loins*? No thanks. How about *NCF* for Negative Cash Flow? Now that's more like it. The following article was written jointly by myself and our 19-year-old son Matthew.

Before reading it, picture the scene in our 'dining room'. We haven't dined there for months. It is filled to capacity with computers, bits of computers, floppies with rigor mortis, coffee-ringed CDs and enough paper to fuel a minor power station. The lounge isn't much better: drum kit, keyboard, assorted amplifiers and a maze of wiring and electrical connections.

I don't dare throw anything away because only he understands these things, and he's (almost) never here to ask.

The Problem: I have a Risc PC with a PC card. I love RISC OS for all the usual reasons, and use it constantly for DTP and music. However, I recently embarked on a correspondence course which uses PC software in abundance and which will need to run fast.

Besides, the hard disc is already nearly full. The question arose as to how to expand it most effectively. Furthermore, for reasons I don't understand, I found browsing the Internet on the Acorn side slow and unproductive, and my email unreliable and unwieldy when dealing with incoming PC attachments. I will also need a new printer some time soon to replace my eight-year-old laser, which has started to groan.

I have therefore been presented with the Great Dilemma faced by all Acorn users at some time or other: how to encompass the need for Windows without losing the quality of RISC OS or cluttering up the dining room with yet another load of plastic boxes.

Rightly or wrongly, I turned to Matthew for advice.

Matthew:

It wasn't very hard to persuade mum to buy a brand-spanking-new PC, after convincing her that it would in fact take up surprisingly little extra space. Cheers mum. I got hold of a switch box capable of switching an SVGA monitor, a keyboard and mouse between two computers, and with all the necessary leads it cost under £50. The only incompatibility here between PC and Acorn was the mouse, but a second mouse hardly took up any space, and they didn't fight. So that was that. We could now flick a switch and the monitor and keyboard simply switched over to the other OS. Not only that but the monitor adjusted the screen frequency rate, resolution and size to suit.

First hurdle sorted.

New problem 1:
Printing became a problem because we couldn't print from both the PC card and the PC without changing connections. However, RISC OS has a separate connection via the LaserDirect podule, so it did not interfere. Unfortunately, when mum

Getting to recognise each other

gets a new printer we won't be able to use this.

New problem 2:
Previously, transferring files between operating systems was easy because they both used the same hard disc but between computers was tedious for large files. Mum likes to scan stuff in RISC OS and then use the images in her posters. Touching-up images is easy on Adobe Photoshop existing on the new PC, so fast file transfer between computers would be a bonus.

The obvious solution would be a network card, but I didn't realise that they were available for the Acorn. I debated on the use of a parallel switch box which is top-notch for printing, and the cost with leads came to about £25 — not bad! But file sharing would have been a problem. The other idea was a second ISA parallel port for the PC at under £20 with a lead but although both file and printer sharing was possible, the operations involved are tedious and not worth bothering with.

Then after discovering the existence and capabilities of Acorn network cards these two suggestions went out of the window. After loads of investigation, I found that networking the PC with RISC OS is no problem with a little extra software. However, involving the PC card meant a little extra dosh for Network Links software from Aleph One.

I later found that the ANT, Atomwide and I-Cubed cards all have the fantastic feature of multiple modes. This means they can act as two separate cards simultaneously, enabling me to use one mode for the PC card and one for RISC OS without

the need to switch or fiddle with any network card settings whatsoever. Not only that, but it also enabled the PC card and RISC OS to see each other through this same card as if there were two completely separate cards there.

I managed to pick up a second-hand ANT card, which looked completely brand-new, for £50, which is cheap for an Acorn product such as this.

After setting everything up, communication between the PC and the PC card was fine. File and printer sharing was super-fast. But in order to involve RISC OS in the network, some additional software was required.

A great program called Samba enabled RISC OS file and printer sharing, so the other systems could then 'see' RISC OS no problem. In order to allow RISC OS to see the others, however, LanMan98 would be required at a cost of £40 odd. But this wasn't actually necessary. As long as I shared the Risc PC hard disc as writable, I could grab and shove any files necessary using the Windows systems.

When we come to getting a new printer however, instead of plugging it into the Acorn and sharing it using Samba, it would be a better idea to plug it into the PC and purchase LanMan98 to enable RISC OS to use it. The printer drivers available are generally better for PC, so to avoid any quality loss this would be the best option.

So, we now have two computers, each with network cards. Although these hold three operating systems, we have no trouble at all with extremely fast file and printer sharing between each of them. Mum can continue with her DTP and faff around with Sibelius in RISC OS and, at the flick of a switch, run Office Pro at high speed.

Having said all this, you guys probably did it years ago!

Rilla:

Thank you, Matthew. As I said, a good word for grown-up children might be NCF's. They do have their uses, though. I am very pleased with my new connections: a particular one I made 20 years ago seems to have paid off.

Textease Studio Database

Peter Jennings looks at the database which has been added to the Textease 2000 DTP program and the spreadsheet to complete Textease Studio.

Textease Studio, the compendium of programs which has grown up around the original desktop publishing program, has now had its final segment, a fully relational database, added. It joins Textease 2000 (the latest version of the DTP program) and the Textease Spreadsheet.

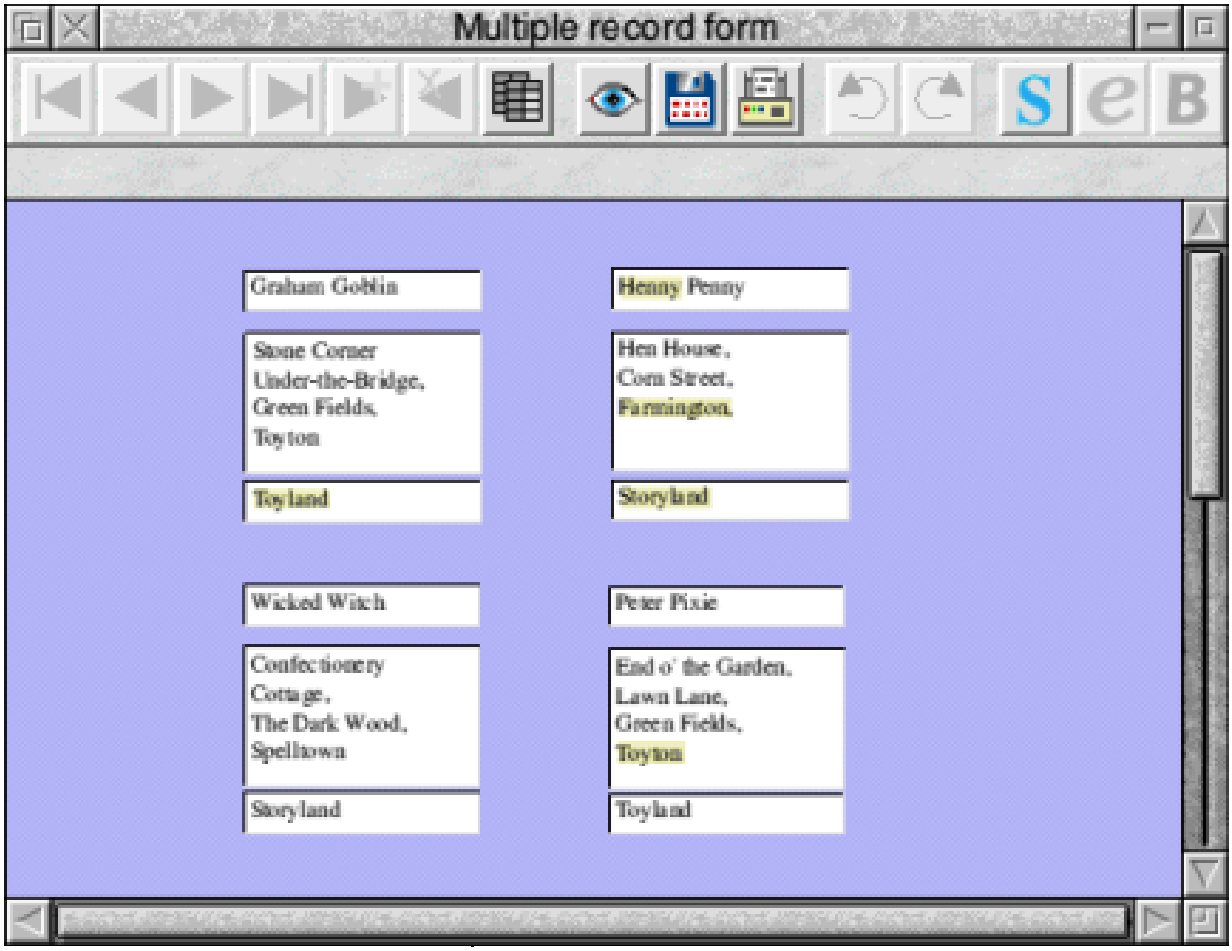
The programs all have four options, Infant, Junior, Senior or Advanced, to set them up in simplified forms for use by children or with full facilities for adults. They can also be bought separately and all files from them can be used on RISC OS, Windows or Mac computers, regardless of which machine they originated on.

Textease Studio comes on a multi-platform CD-ROM with an individual spiral-bound user guide for each of the three programs, all securely encased in two nested boxes. There is also a floppy disc service pack but in Windows format only and I don't know what this is supposed to do.

The CD is crammed with useful extras including a new, free, set of National Curriculum resources. ***(See examples following this review.)***

There are some tutorial videos on different aspects of Textease but nothing on the database. However it is clearly explained, with an example to work through, in the 32-page user guide.

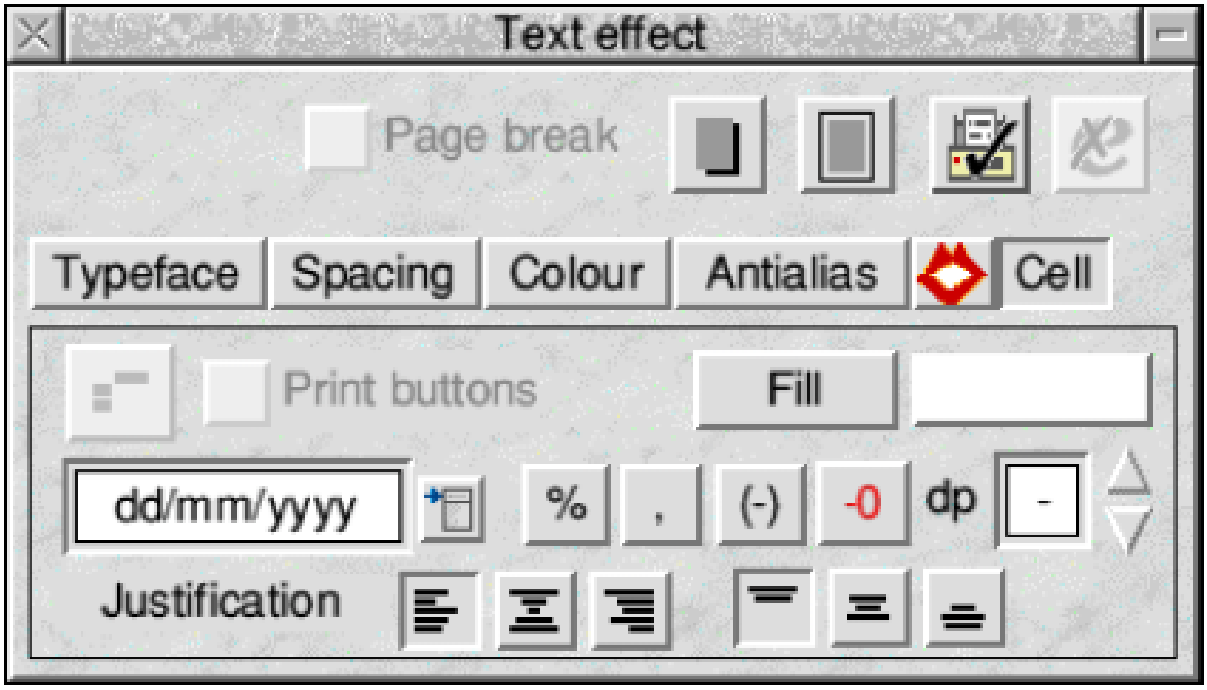
The videos all show the Windows version of Textease with some unfamiliar icons. But the most striking difference is the poor quality of the Windows text, compared with the antialiased style we have always been used to since Acorn days. Apart from the fact that Windows machines are now the biggest market for



Data can be shown in card form, singly or in multiples (as above) or presented as a report (as right) or in graphs or chart form.

These can include the data from all or just selected fields

	Name	Age	Height	Weight
1	Mary Johnson	5yrs	104cm	17.5kg
2	Linda Moses	5yrs	107cm	18.5kg
3	Julie Wells	5yrs	108cm	18.3kg
4	Mandy White	6yrs	109cm	18.9kg
5	Sue Wills	5yrs	110cm	19.8kg
6	Sandra Wood	5yrs	111cm	19.6kg
7	Sam Green	6yrs	112cm	20.5kg
8	Jamie Johnson	5yrs	113cm	20.4kg
9	James Taylor	6yrs	114cm	20.8kg
10	Sarah Jones	6yrs	114cm	20.7kg
11	Simon James	5yrs	115cm	20.9kg
12	Jane Ash	6yrs	115cm	20.9kg
13	Paul Hill	6yrs	117cm	21.4kg
14	David Shaw	5yrs	117cm	22.5kg
15	Peter Smith	6yrs	118cm	21.7kg
16	Julie Gregory	6yrs	119cm	22.8kg
17	Steven Taylor	6yrs	121cm	24.1kg
18	Matthew Young	6yrs	124cm	25.6kg



The text effect window allowing the Cell settings for measurements and currency symbols and a choice of formats for the date and how negative figures are to be displayed

software it is probably wise not to show a standard which Windows users cannot expect to emulate.

The database puts a new icon on the icon bar and, when clicked on, opens a window, with a plain lilac coloured background and a button bar with an information line at the top, ready to be made into a database form. The database is also launched if an existing database file icon is clicked on.

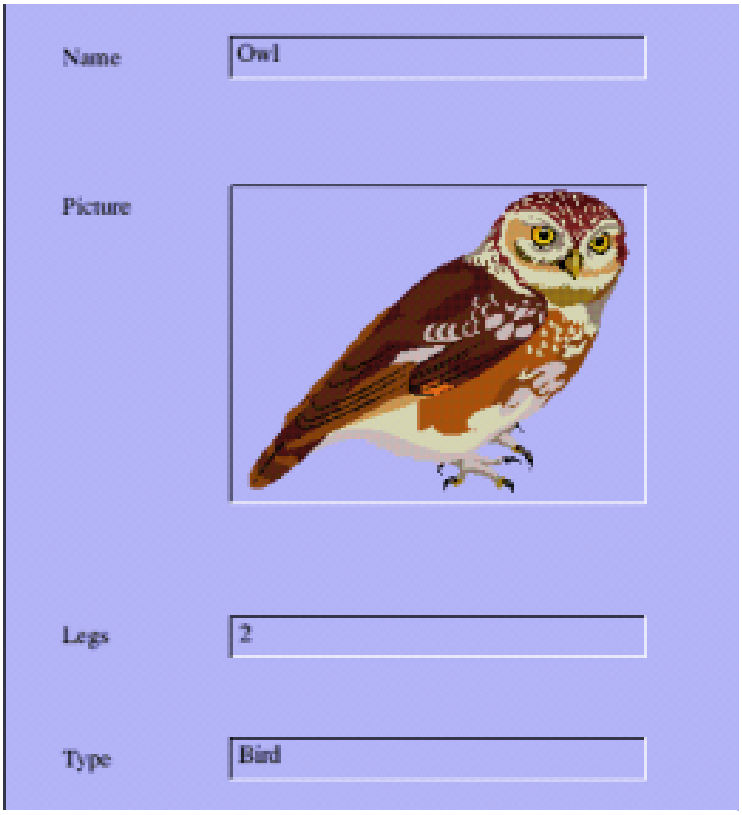
A new database is very simply created by opening a menu and clicking on *Add field*. This produces a dotted rectangle which can be positioned where required to become a 3D-effect box labelled *Field 1*, ready to be renamed. The box can be dragged to size and repositioned, as can the name beside it, which can also be rotated if you wish.

A Text Effect window allows you to choose settings for Typeface, Spacing, Colour, Antialias, Voice and Cell (which includes entry of measurements and currency symbols, a choice of formats for the date and how negative figures are to be displayed).

Text, graphics, video and sound files can all be imported and included in the records. Macros can be set up for quick entry of repetitious text.

There is a window to search and replace and count the number of finds.

Once saved, the data can be presented in its original card form, singly or in multiples, as *reports*, graphs or charts in a choice of formats and with all fields or just selected ones included.



A record can include pictures, video and sound as well as text

With a database of names and addresses a selection can be printed out on mailing labels and entries can be selected for mail merge in personalised letters.

Like the other applications in the Textease Studio, the Database lives up to the Softease name for being easy to use, by all age groups and it has the versatility to fill most needs for storing and filing information and more.

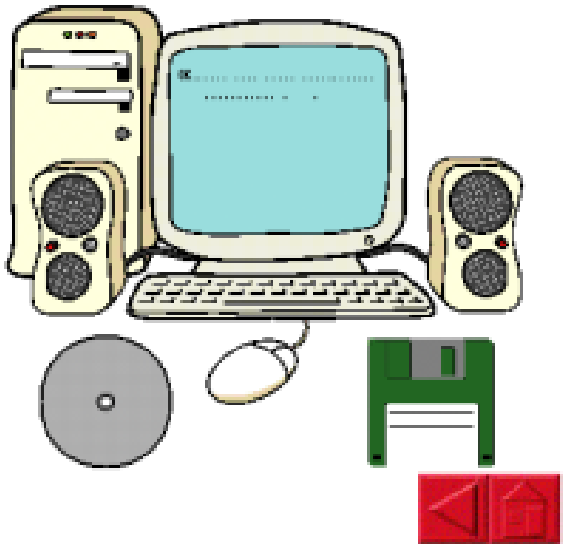
Textease Database
Price (Database only): £39
Multi users: +£10 each
Textease Studio: £149
Multi users: +£25 each
(All prices +VAT)
Supplier: Softease Limited
Market Place, Ashbourne
Derbyshire DE6 1ES
Tel: 01335 343421
Fax: 01335 343422
Email: sales@softease.co.uk
Web: www.textease.com

For examples of the free National Curriculum resources see next two pages.

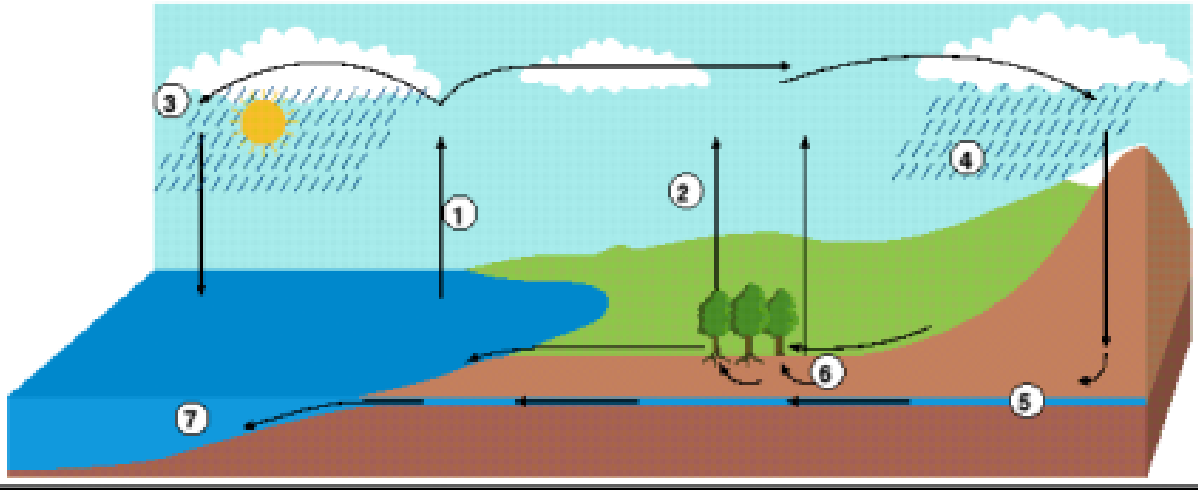
Textease National Curriculum Packs

PCs are used for many things. List 10 things you can do with one.

Uses for a PC	Have you used a PC for this ? - Yes or No.



Click on the numbers on the diagram to hear the commentary. Then write your own captions in the key below. There are words in the Word bank to help you.



All Textease products are now supplied with a free National Curriculum resources pack containing more than 80 exercises on subjects for Key Stages one to four, including English, Maths, History, Geography, ICT, Music, Science, Citizenship, Art and design, Modern foreign languages and Design and Technology. They can also be downloaded from the Textease Website.

Above are exercises from KS2 ICT and KS3 Geography

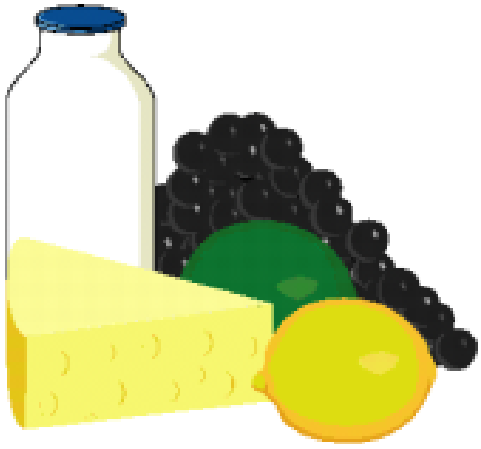
KS3 Science
Sc2 Life processes and living things
Humans as organisms
Nutrition - A balanced diet

textease

Key Stage 3

Complete the table, giving examples of foods containing each component; then fill in the missing letters to give the seven constituents of the human diet. Click on the life-belt help icon to check your work.

Foods	Examples
carbohydrate - glucose	
carbohydrate - starch	
protein	
fat	
vitamin C	
vitamin D	
dietary fibre	
calcium	

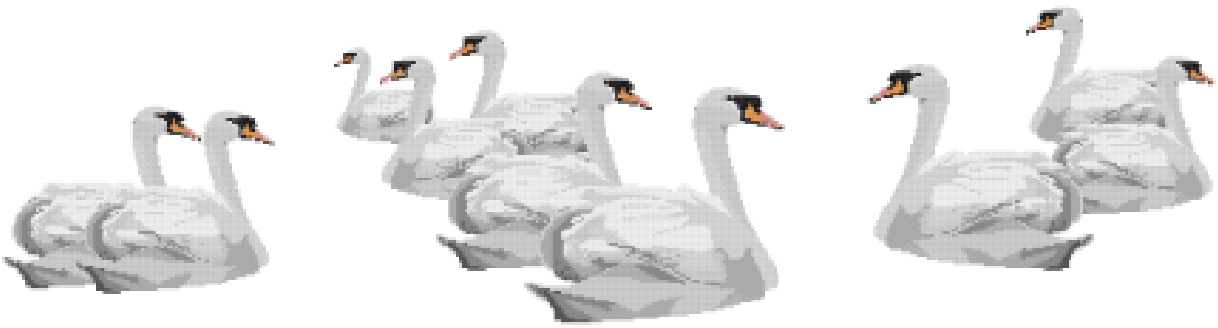


Complete the words.
Human diet consists of:

c _____
p _____
fa __
m _____
v _____
fi ____
and,
w ____

Exercises from KS3 Science (above) and KS1 Mathematics

How many swans?



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

Correct Answer = ☐

ArtWorks TextArea Module

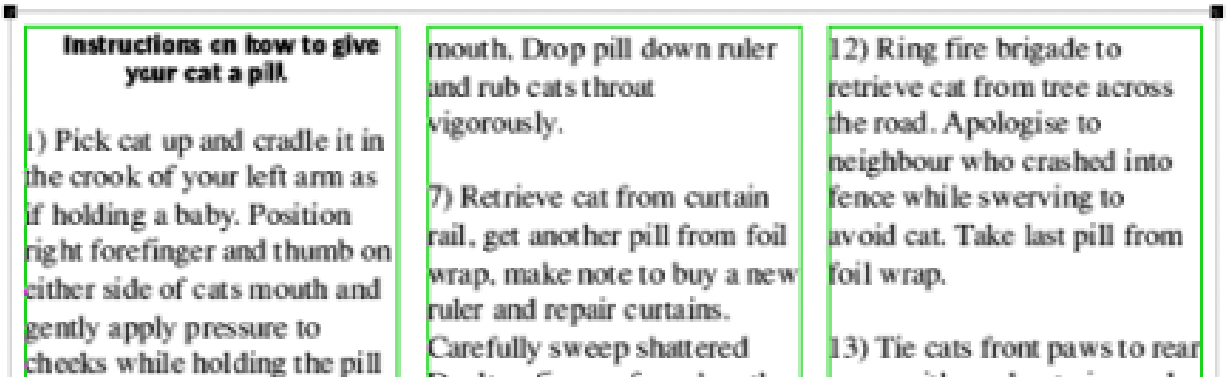
Christopher Jarman tries out the last add-on for ArtWorks to see what he can do with text and finds he can now add it in columns almost instantly.

If you have all of Martin Wurthner's ArtWorks add-ons then you have just about doubled both the value of your copy of ArtWorks as well as quadrupling its effectiveness. I have been very fortunate in being able to review each of them as they became available. I have at least eleven permanently installed with my copy of ArtWorks, and this latest TextArea module is one of the best. As you will know, it has always been possible to use text on an ArtWorks page. But that about says it all. Compared with the average DTP program there was not a great deal you could do with it.

Now you can add this new module into the Auto directory just as before, and you have two new buttons on the toolbar called *A* and *E*. The A button allows you to drag out a TextArea to any size and rectangle you wish. The E button then allows you to edit whatever you put inside it. It works just as intuitively as the rest of ArtWorks. Each button has its own toolbar below the window with a variety of functions available.

For instance within *Area* you can choose how many columns of text you want. It would seem that these are infinite in number, but I thought eight was about as many as I would ever need. You may choose the gap between columns too by merely entering in the number of millimetres you want.On button *E* for edit, you can choose fonts, colours, justification, tabs and so on, all the control you want really. Once you have a TextArea going, it becomes, in effect, another ArtWorks object and can be dealt with in that way.

Text colour and background colours can be applied to the text, so a merry time can be had trying out all sorts of tasteless combinations. The TextArea



Instructions on how to give your cat a pill.

1) Pick cat up and cradle it in the crook of your left arm as if holding a baby. Position right forefinger and thumb on either side of cats mouth and gently apply pressure to cheeks while holding the pill

mouth. Drop pill down ruler and rub cats throat vigorously.

7) Retrieve cat from curtain rail, get another pill from foil wrap, make note to buy a new ruler and repair curtains. Carefully sweep shattered

12) Ring fire brigade to retrieve cat from tree across the road. Apologise to neighbour who crashed into fence while swerving to avoid cat. Take last pill from foil wrap.

13) Tie cats front paws to rear

Part of a three column page of text produced almost instantly

itself can be treated like any other rectangle and filled with say, a radial or graduated fill underneath the text. It really is an excellent feature.

I chose a three column page of text to see how quickly it could be made. In fact it was almost instantaneous. To insert a textfile you drop it onto the first column and a window asks 'Do you want to place this text on the TextArea clipboard or pass it on to the standard text loader?' You should select *Clipboard* and then hit Ctrl-V on your keyboard to put the text in place. You can then select any bits of text by striping with the mouse and edit to your heart's content — brilliant! The usual undo facility works as well.

The TextArea module will be superb for designing all kinds of one-page layouts such as flyers, leaflets, news sheets and so on. Anyone familiar with the way Textease works will see a great similarity with this new aspect of ArtWorks. The shape of the TextArea cannot be changed, nor will it export into Impression or OvationPro. I also found that the file would save out as an ArtWorks EPS file but that it would not then transfer to the PC in Corel Xara like the normal ArtWorks files. However, it is a great new piece of kit and once again congratulations to Martin for keeping the flag flying.

ArtWorks TextArea module
Price: £35
Site licence: £87.50
Supplier: Martin Wuerthner
Mannheimer Str. 18
67655 Kaiserslautern, Germany
Tel: +49 (0)631 3608205
Fax: +49 (0)7034 928915
Email: martin@mw-software.com
Web: www.mw-software.com/

Putting Your Holiday Photos On CD

Here's all you need to know about preparing your holiday photos — film or digital — to make an album on CD-ROM, with easy to follow details by David Ruck.

Four of the ARM Club Committee, Mark, Simon, Tom and myself have just managed to get away for a well deserved holiday on Gran Canaria. We all had a fantastic time soaking up the sun, driving around the stunning volcanic scenery, scuba diving, jet-skiing, paragliding and enjoying the nightlife. Once back it's nice to preserve the memories (and the blackmail opportunities) in the holiday snaps. We took a variety of different film and digital cameras with us and each person managed to capture a unique moment. So we decided to put all the pictures together on a CD-ROM so we could each have a copy of all the shots, without spending a fortune on photographic prints.

Which type of camera, film or digital, to take is still a debate. From the point of view of making up a CD-ROM, digital is the most convenient and eliminates the need for time-consuming scanning. However, film cameras are still more capable and far cheaper than their digital equivalents, until you have used about 50 rolls of film. Digital cameras are getting much better though. My two year old Olympus C900 (1280x960 images) was good at the time but equivalent in lack of features to a cheap 35mm zoom film camera. Now while still quite expensive, the C3040 (2048x1536 images) offers much improved quality of image, low light level capabilities and a range of automatic and manual exposure settings equivalent to a good SLR camera. However, all these settings do mean you need to be aware of issues that apply to film cameras such as film ASA ratings, shutter speeds and aperture stops, to get the best results.

You might be a bit reluctant to carry around a camera worth £600+ when

on the beach or at a night club, so you might want to consider a cheap film camera to supplement your digital. As luck would have it, a few days before I won a small disposable camera from Smartgroups, for doing no more than filling up their server with pictures. This little camera was easy to carry in a pocket and ready any time a good photo opportunity presented itself.

So you've uploaded the digital pictures, or got the prints back from the developers, the first thing to do before preparing any images on the computer is to calibrate your monitor. This is essential to get a reference point for any work you do, so it will appear the same on other peoples monitors which have also been calibrated. It also makes it much easier to get good results when printing. You'll find all the digital camera pictures are set to display correctly on a calibrated monitor and are too dark when viewed with the default RISC OS linear settings.

You can calibrate using Photodesk so that any work you do will be correct but then you need to load it each time to get the gamma correction for when you are viewing pictures. There is an application that comes with the Cerilica Vantage Publishing Pack that calibrates the monitor and saves the settings as a utility which you can load all the time from your boot sequence. The only problem with this is that the RISC OS 4 fade on a mode change loses the gamma settings, so you might want to use RISC OS 4 ROM patch v5 by Darren Salt which turns off the fade. It can be downloaded at www.youmustbejoking.demon.co.uk

To calibrate your monitor:-

1 Run !Photodesk or !Monitor. You will see each as a strip of grey, red, green and blue consisting of alternate squares of solid colour at 50% intensity and a dither pattern of 0% and 100% of the colour. The secret of calibration is to make the squares look the same.

2 Select a lower resolution mode, such as 800x600x16M or 1024x768x32K. It's important that you can make out each pixel of the dither patterns on screen to calibrate correctly. At 1600x1200 on a 17" screen the pattern is indistinct and so can't be accurately matched against the 50% solid colour.

3 Adjust the monitor's brightness control so you can just distinguish the first level of grey up from black but not too high so black is no longer completely dark.

4 You then need to adjust the gamma correction so that the dithered pattern looks the same level of brightness as the 50% patch of solid colour. On Photodesk you do this using the up and down buttons next to the gamma number. On Monitor you drag the handles on the bezier curve. You can either adjust the grey component first and then adjust the red/green/blue to correct for any impurities, or just adjust the settings for each colour individually, as I've found this to produce slightly better results. Normally each colour will have a similar value but my old trusty AKF85 has developed a very noticeable green cast, so red and blue have significantly higher settings to compensate.

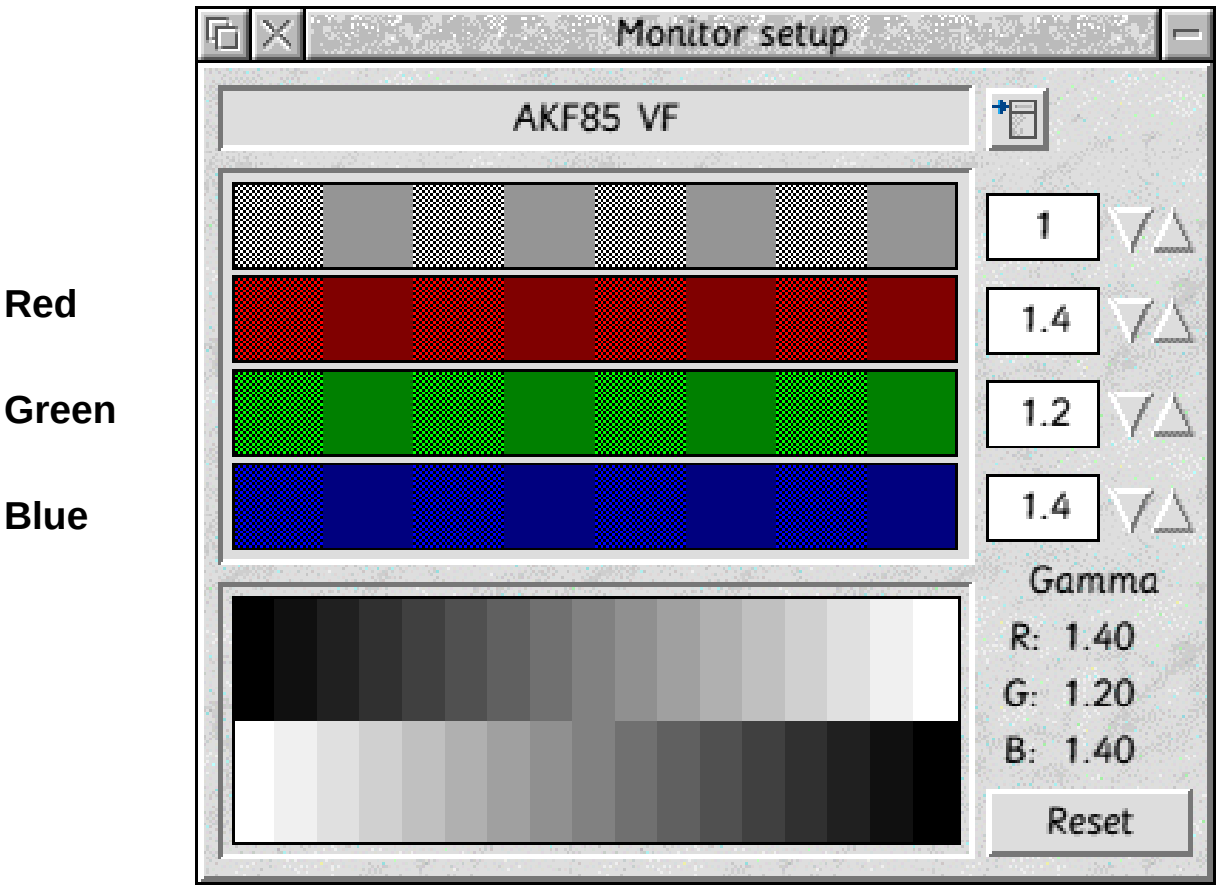


Figure 1: The Photodesk calibration window

5 Repeat the process using !Monitor if you want to save the settings to use all the time. You have to try to make it match what you did with Photodesk as unfortunately it can't read the current settings and the method is different having a bezier curve rather than gamma numbers. You still need Photodesk calibration or it will reset things when run.

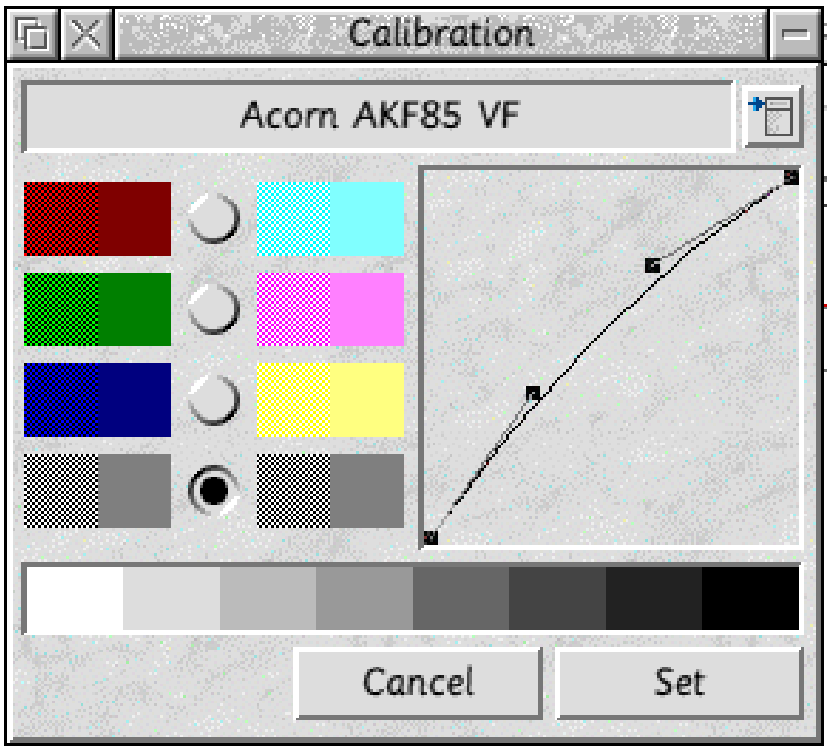


Figure 2: The !Monitor Calibration window

You can switch between the settings of the two programs while running by re-selecting from the menu in Photodesk, or changing something in Monitor. Ignore what Monitor does to the desktop palette as this isn't saved. When finished save the settings from Monitor to your !Boot.choices.predesk directory so they are loaded all the time.

6 Now you can start processing the pictures. Starting with the ones from the digital camera, as there is the least work to do. These cameras usually produce good results under all circumstances but there are a few things that can be done to get the best results.

Brightening: Most cameras except the latest are the equivalent of 100ASA film, so only produce the best results in bright lighting conditions. Luckily a dark picture can normally be redeemed with a bit of gamma correction. Don't over correct or you will start to see artefacts from the JPEG compression which tends to lose detail that is too dark for the eye to see.

Rotation: It is very easy when taking a shot to hold the camera at a slight

angle without realising it. This is then very obvious if you have a horizontal or vertical feature in the shot, such as the horizon or a lamp post. Rotating the picture to correct for this makes it much more pleasing to look at.

Cropping: Even with the camera's LCD screen, it's very easy to include things at the edges of the shot that you don't want in the picture. Cropping to emphasise the subject of the photo can dramatically improve it and is something you learn with experience.

Lastly, the pictures from some newer digital cameras are very slow to display with the internal RISC OS routines, such as when using !Thump (www.actrix.gen.nz/users/rick/software.html). Running them through a utility such as !JClean (www.dacha.freeuk.com/) or !CleanJPEG (www.sliced.demon.co.uk/software/cleanjpeg/) will remove any unnecessary data from the file and ensure it loads quickly with the internal routines, without losing any image quality.

Now moving on to pictures from the film camera, these need to be scanned to get them into the computer, which is a chore when you have a whole roll or more but worth getting right. The first mistake people make is scanning at too high a resolution, the correct resolution to use depends on how much information is in the source and what the image is to be used for. There is only generally around 200dpi worth of information in photographic prints on glossy paper, so scanning at a higher resolution will only lead to an unnecessarily large and less sharp file. Then consider that if the output is going to be shown on screen (such as on a web page) rather than printing, having an image much larger than the screen will waste disc and web space and make displaying slower. Bear in mind however that resolutions do increase with time, the largest mode on a standard Risc PC in 32K colours is 1152x896 but with the ViewFinder card allows 1600x1200 with 16M colours.

I've chosen to get the maximum resolution from the prints, so will need 200dpi. However I've found with my very old scanner that certain resolutions lead to an uneven looking image, where the scanner has performed the scaling. Therefor I always scan at the optical resolution

of 300dpi and use the superior algorithms in Photodesk for scaling the image to the desired resolution. Bi-cubic produces the very best results but bi-linear is indistinguishable and slightly faster.

When scanning, make sure that the image is square on the scanner, as getting it right physically is quicker and produces better results than correcting on the computer. However it can be difficult because shiny photos tend to whizz off the glass when the lid is shut, so close it carefully. Also photos tend to be curved after going through the mechanical developing process, so you may want to put something heavy on the scanner's lid to make sure they lay flat. Use the preview option of the scanner to select the area of the photo of interest to scan, often images can be made much more dramatic by closing in on the subject rather than taking whatever happens to be at the edges of the viewfinder when you took the shot.

Modern scanning software often has an automatic setting to ensure a close match between the colours and brightness of the original and the scan. However older ones, such as mine, produce far too dark an image, while others have produced far too light an image, so some correction is needed.

First you need to correct for any under or overexposure by the scanner by equalising the distribution of brightness levels across the whole range. In Photodesk you can use the equalise option of the image processing tool to do this. Figure 3 shows a scan which is overexposed (too bright). Clicking on the dark/light button (next to update) will automatically set the adjustment lines to the darkest and brightest points on the graph. Use the magic wand tool set to the whole image and click on the image to perform the equalisation. You will see the image now becomes darker and has increased contrast, if you click on the update button notice how the brightness levels have become equally distributed.

However the image will now probably be slightly too dark, so you will need to apply a gamma correction. Photodesk allows you a lot of flexibility to choose the correction by editing a curve but this

can make it confusing to pick the one most suitable for the particular image. A good place to start is with one of the present ones, such as brighten mid tones, so turn on automatic preview (the eye icon) and experiment dragging the curve around. Generally a fairly symmetrical curve gives good results brightening the light and dark areas of the image equally (figure 4). However for images featuring clouds you may want to make the curve flatter at the top, to brighten the light areas less, so the cloud detail does not become washed out.

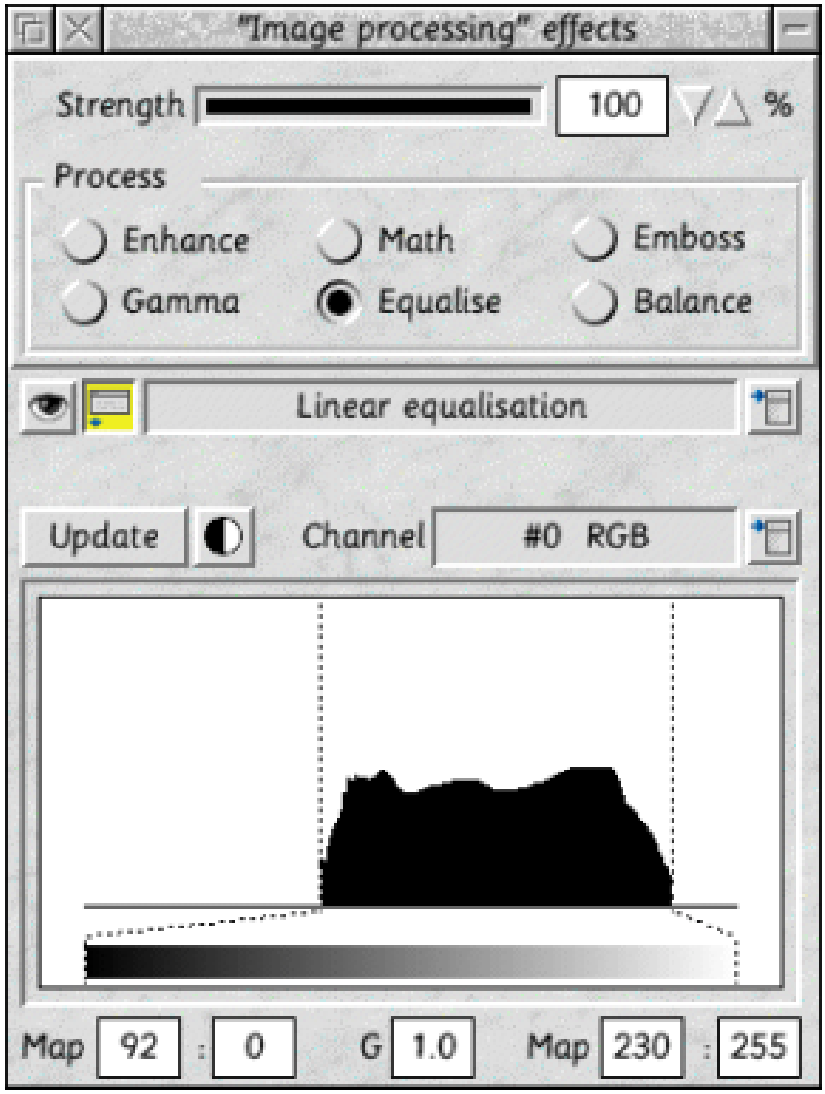


Figure 3: Photodesk's equalisation window

Conversely, with night shots, a flatter area at the bottom prevents black becoming dark grey but still lightens the mid and light parts. Use the whole image magic wand again to apply the effect and, if you will be using the correction for a number of similar shots, you can type a name in to the name box and use the pop up menu to save it so it can be re-used.

If the image was very dark and you have had to brighten it significantly you can find that the colours of the image become very pale. This can be corrected by increasing the saturation of the colours. PhotoDesk's colouring effect allows you do this, by using the

ink pot to select toning effects rather than plain colours (figure 5). Increasing the 'S'aturation icon to around 33% and applying with the magic wand will bring back the vibrant colours of the original.

At this point you want to examine the image for defects. This can be anything from dust on the scanner, marks from the developing process on the prints, or even a finger print on the lens. These can be fixed with a bit of care, by using the cloning effect through the airbrush with a low radius density setting. Clone a similar area over the top of the defect and you'll have an image better than the original photo.

The last thing to do to an image is to resharpen it using the unsharp mask feature from the FX tools. This a very powerful feature but you need to know what settings to use appropriate to the image you are working on. The radius corrects the degree of blurring and as we are only compensating for a the reduction in sharpness from scanning and rescaling, this is can be set to the minimum of 1%. If you are correcting an out of focus image or slight motion

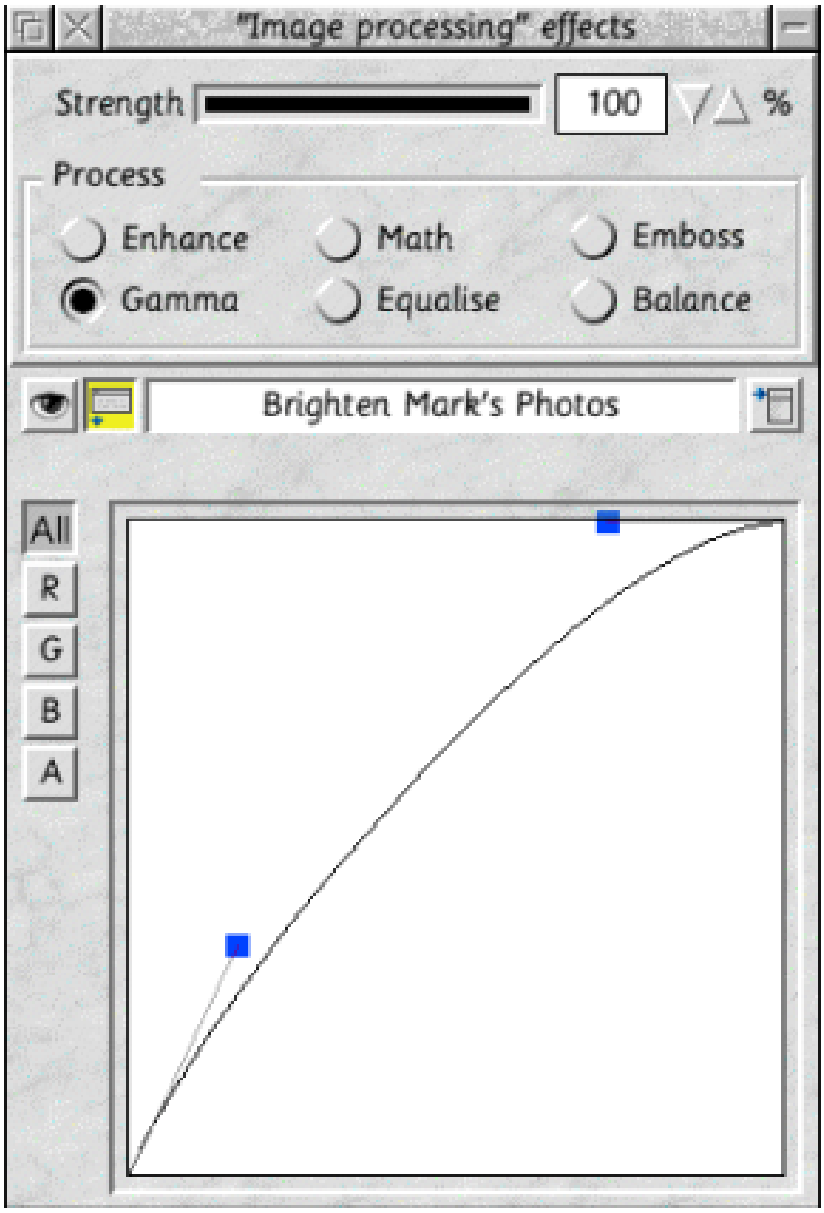


Figure 4: Photodesk's gamma correction window

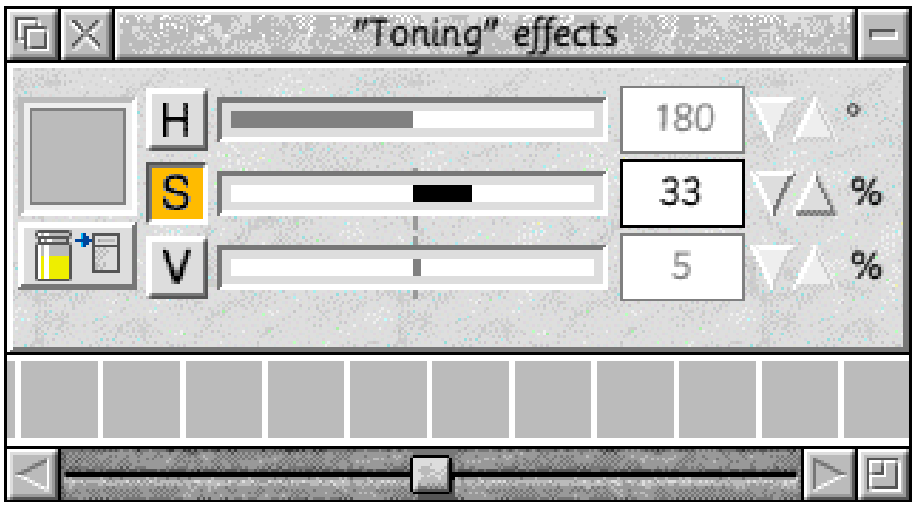


Figure 5: Photodesk's toning effects window

The threshold determines when the sharpening kicks in. On very good images a value of 1% can be used but on those where the grain of the film is showing you can use a value of 2% or more. A larger value avoids enhancing the noisiness of the grain in areas of plain colour but still sharpens the major features.

blur you can experiment with higher values but the higher number here means using a lower contrast boost or you will find objects having cartoon-like black or white lines drawn round them.

The contrast boost determines how much sharpening is used. For scanning this needs to be weak to moderate, 50% to 150%. This is so as not to over emphasise features or show up any graininess of the film (especially noticeable on APS panoramic prints which are just the normal film scaled up and cropped to shape). You don't want to make it too weak, however, as saving in JPEG format tends to reduce sharpness slightly.

Lastly, for more advanced users you may want to try to correct for other features of the image which aren't quite right. I've noticed something that seems to have affected the shots I did with the disposable camera as a consequence of its tiny lens but also affects some of the APS panoramic shots; that being the centre circular portion of some images is very bright but the edges tail off in brightness dramatically. While this effect can look quite pleasing on square shots, I find it rather distracting on the elongated shape. This can be corrected by applying a graded circular mask to the image and

brightening the bits outside. To do this:

Figure 6: Photodesk's unsharp mask window

1 Select the masking tool and reduce the masking depth to zero, then bring up the gradient tool (third button along the toolbar) and click on *start*. Increase the mask depth back to 100% and click on *end*. This makes a mask that will go from full protection to nothing (despite this being the reverse of what you'd expect).

2 Adjust the gradient curve so as to produce maximum effect in the centre and then tail off gradually at the outside.

3 Select a radial gradient and click *setup*. The pointer changes to an arrow to set up the gradient area. Click in the centre of the image to select the start point, then almost at the edge to select the end point.

4 Then apply the mask using the magic wand set to whole image. The mask will be created and coloured red as in figure 7.

5 Now select the gamma image processing tool and click disable on the gradient tool, as you don't want a gradient on the tool itself having set up a mask first. You can dispense with the mask and use the gradient directly but it's much easier to tell where the

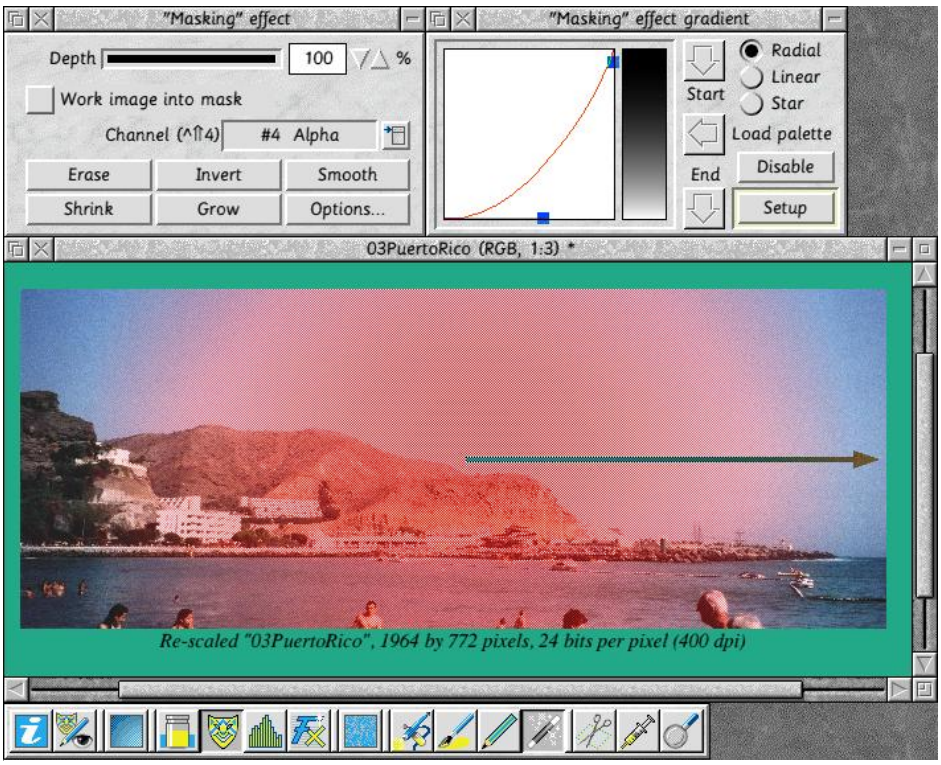


Figure 7: Applying a radial mask to correct dark edges of an image

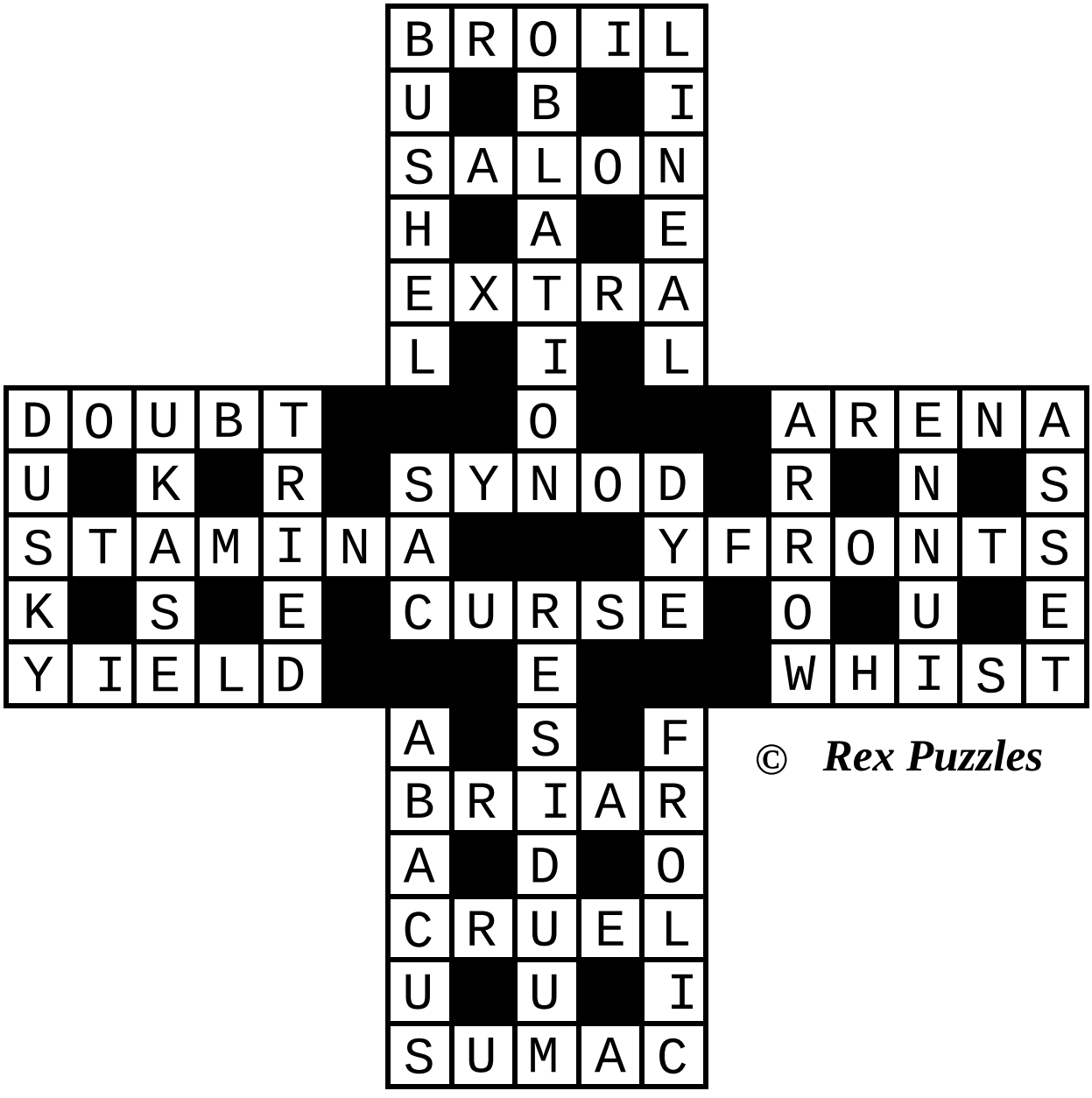
effect is going to go by using the mask which is visible. But you'll want to make the mask invisible (set from the channels dialog, second icon on the toolbar), so you can compare the masked and unmasked portions without the red tinge.

6 Apply a slight increase in brightness with the magic wand set to whole image. Working through the mask, this will only brighten the outside. It's best to do a slight increase and keep applying it, as the preview will show the effect over the whole image making it hard to judge what you need to do to make the centre and edges of the image consistent.

Now if you have managed to cope with all that, all that remains is to put all your images onto CD-ROM for a permanent record of the holidays. WSS's !CDBurn will manage this extremely well, being able to build a CD-ROM directly from a directory structure without having to create an ISO image first. A tip is to add */jpg* extensions to your picture names before doing this, so the pictures can then be read on a PC (where they'll be shown as *.jpg*). CDBurn also supports the joliet extensions, so that long filenames are preserved on the PC, or on RISC OS when using WSS's !CDROMFS. This is all very handy should you want to show off the wild time you've had to your work colleagues!

The DOUBLECROSS Solution

(The puzzle is on page 25)



© *Rex Puzzles*

There will be another DOUBLECROSS Puzzle in our next issue.

Part 2

The RISC OS Show Story

How nine months' work by a small team of volunteers resulted in two crowded and busy days at the RISC OS 2000 Show —as seen and experienced by John Sawer.

To make the Show a success required two things. A large number of exhibitors, offering a wide range of products (and preferably something new). Lots of visitors prepared to travel to the venue and to spend lots of money. It may appear these objectives go hand in hand (and to some extent they do) but the approach to meeting then is very different.

Mark Smith contacted exhibitors individually and the personal contacts established last year paid dividends as more and more signed up for the Show. An invaluable aid was the resounding success of RISC OS 99 and there is little doubt word got round how well attended this had been. Many companies considered RISC OS 99 one of their most successful shows, rivalling the last Acorn World. However, RISC OS companies are not awash with money and many left a commitment until the last moment. Efforts were made to introduce Psion dealers but their interest proved impossible to kindle. However, Palmtop magazine represented Psion and Palm users (a particularly adept move since RiscStation launched their Osaris palmtop —but I am getting ahead of myself). It was believed that RiscStation would have their laptop at the Show, this being seen as a bit of a coup adding to the excitement of the Show, both in attracting visitors and giving confidence that the Show would be a success, itself an aid in signing up exhibitors

Advertisements were the core way of attracting visitors and were in electronic and paper form. ROUGOL looked after the former, establishing links between the RISC OS 2000 site and those of exhibitors, also well known Acorn/RISC OS sites (and some I had never heard of).

SASAUG handled the paper approach and this took three forms. Press releases announced the latest details of the Show and exhibitors. The lack of definite bookings from many potential exhibitors meant that these sometimes had to use an inventive approach. Posters were placed at all major shows, primarily at Wakefield and the SE Show. Exhibitors committed to RISC OS 2000 were more than happy to carry posters as well as (of course) The ARM Club. A key feature of the advertising campaign was an eye-catching advertisement to feature in Acorn User and other important RISC OS magazines. In 1999 the advert had been created by Chris Hornby of Spacetech (now Photodesk). A visit to Portland was paid to find that Chris was happy to help again and the basic structure of the advert was mapped out. The 'bubbles' theme of 1999 was translated into balloons. Photodesk was used to create the artwork (including photos of balloons that were blown up and launched by Rachelle), Geoff Arnold of SASAUG took digital photos of Epsom and one of these was integrated into the advertisement. A road map (another Geoff creation) and details of opening times etc were added. I guess Chris took several days to complete the advert and I would like to express our thanks for his time and expertise. As an aside, have you noticed what a lot of hard working and dedicated people there are in the RISC OS world. Can you imagine a company in the PC market freely giving their time to support organisation of a show?

As the weekend of the Show approached, all seemed to be fitting into place. Rob Brown and Tom Hughes had dealt with venue, theatre and shell scheme organisation. A well designed shell scheme is an essential. It projects a high class show and allows exhibitors to advertise their wares in an effective way. Rob and Tom had seemingly endless discussions with exhibitors regarding stand frontage, location, tables, power, lighting, telephone, ISDN lines and a host of other individual requirements. While most of the organisation was carried out ahead of the Show, problems were still being resolved until (and even after) the Show opened. Throughout, Rob and Tom sought to disprove the adage that you cannot please all the people all the time.

Shuttle buses and first aid cover were arranged by Dave Ruck while tickets and passes were in Toby Smith's hands.

There remained the job of organising the show guide. That for RISC OS 99 had used A4 format but the excellent Wakefield guide had been in A5 and we decided this was preferable. Chris Hornby provided a cut down advert for the cover and Mark Smith laid out the floor plans. Adverts were included to offset the cost of printing and the remaining content (introduction, exhibitor guide, theatre programme and guide to the organisers) were created by SASAUG. The layout of the guide and final printing were entrusted to the ever reliable Mike Williams of Akalat Publishing (famed for the excellent Acorn Publisher magazine). At frequent intervals extra exhibitors were added and Mike was including extra names until the last possible moment.

To run a successful show, a large number of volunteers is essential, these manning the doors and theatre, sorting out problems, filling bags with show guides, information and hand-outs and a host of other tasks. At RISC OS 99, there had not been enough help to unload exhibitors vans. Learning from this, ROUGOL organised and coordinated a large number of helpers from all the local (and not-so-local) user groups. A schedule was devised to give adequate volunteer cover while allowing the helpers to see something of the Show. Well that was the theory anyway!

As the Show approached, the financial position was not great and we needed a large number of visitors to be sure of breaking even. To even out the Saturday/Sunday visitor numbers, members of The ARM Club, ROUGOL and SASAUG were admitted free on Sunday, so the number of paying visitors was far from certain.

Finally, after nine months of preparation, the weekend of the Show arrived. A large number of helpers arrived on Friday to put up directions, theatre programmes, shuttle bus timetables etc. Scarcely had that been finished than the first exhibitor (Castle) arrived, just after 10:30 am. Unloading and carrying seemingly endless (heavy) boxes then continued until the last van was unloaded (RiscStation) around 9:00 pm. Some were relatively easy but at the other

extreme Chris Evans brought his entire shop, including the counter (which only just fitted in the lift).

An early start on the Saturday allowed last minute preparations. Dave went off to Epsom station to make sure that shuttle bus directions and timetables were in place and confirmed that buses were running. We then stood round anxiously waiting to see how many visitors would arrive for the opening. We need not have worried. Anyone who was there knows that by about 11:00 the Show was packed and Saturday was really busy all day. As somebody pointed out, at the average computer show (ie not a RISC OS show!), visitors stay one to two hours. At Epsom people were staying all day and no wonder, there was so much to see and do (and buy). My brief excursions around the Show were just not long enough. My efforts to see Dave Holden were thwarted by crowds at least three deep round the APDL stand. Sunday started off slowly and the apparent trickle of visitors would surely mean I could see some of the Show. It seemed incredible but the Show was almost as busy as Saturday. I wanted to buy a digital camera from Chris Hornby and finally got to see him 10 minutes before the Show closed, although even then he still had two other customers. Chris had long since sold out of compact cameras and this seemed a common theme. Diane Rawnsley saying that R-Comp sales were better than the last Acorn World.

Epsom may be remembered for the launch of the Mico Omega. Launch is perhaps the wrong word since this comprised a number of posters that appeared on the Saturday. Ironically, Microdigital chose not to exhibit at Epsom, the official line being the need to continue work on the machine. The RiscStation portable was at the Show but not on sale; a disappointment to several who came along, with cash, to buy one.

Once the last visitor had departed, all that remained to do was load up exhibitors' vans (although sales resulted in the loads being somewhat lighter) take down all the posters, clear the unsold goods from the charity stand, generally clear up and dump the rubbish in the skip.

Now we are organising RISC OS 2001. We must be mad!

Gill's Decisive Journal

For this issue's Journal, I thought it might be interesting to tackle a spod trait that has been mentioned in previous issues, but never fully analysed. I'm going to write about indecisiveness. I think. Maybe.

There's no doubt about it, our diarist Gill Smith decisively tackles one of the big problems of life among the spods with no hesitation, indecision or faffing about.

(Sorry, oldest joke in the book. Won't happen again!)

It's a trait that varies between fascinating and frustrating, with occasional detours into funny or freakish. Why can't spods make up their minds on anything? Is it really so hard to agree a place to eat, or somewhere to go for a drink, what to do for an evening out, or even just pick something to eat from that long and complicated McBurger menu? Surely not!

And as with every other strange, seemingly inexplicable spod trait, yours truly, Gill Smith — investigative journalist — sets out to discover the truth behind the faffing. We're going to analyse this properly. The major questions of journalism are these: who, what, when, where, why and how. Let's take them one at a time.

Who? Spods. It's spods that faff like no other groups of people I know. Plausibly, the more technically clued-up, the bigger the dithering. We'll look into that one later. Spods dither more in groups than alone, as far as my survey can tell. (It is the collective term after all: a dither of spods.) Of course, that can either be put down to a cumulative effect of many spods make long-winded decisions, or that each individual spod doesn't have enough ideas, or enough complicated options, by themselves, to have to decide between them. I mean, here's a tricky one: RISC OS, or MS Windows? Now let me think…

What? The 'what' of this one is the faffing, dithering indecisiveness. What spods do is faff. They fail to make their minds up. They ponder and consider various options, while rarely reaching a conclusion, usually in a force 10 gale, or better still, a blizzard. If that's not an option, then they'll instead mull over the multiple possibilities offered by the question of food, just when you're feeling that Comic Relief might like to pop round and film you keeling over from hunger for their next show. After all that indecisiveness, what you need is a drink.

Unfortunately, that's forced another long session of indecision as to where, unless you're smart enough to have brought a hip flask. Heck, the amount of dithering that goes on, you might want to go for bringing the whole barrel!

When? Now this is a really easy one. Anytime. Absolutely anytime. Spods can dither at any hour of the day or night, (to the best of my knowledge!) They have a particular specialist subject of dithering when you're about to miss a train home, when you're already late for the restaurant booking, or when the West End show that took three years to decide to see is starting in 30 seconds, at least 15 minutes' walk away. Whenever spods are gathered together, faffing is the

inevitable result. Perhaps even, wherever a spod is, regardless of the group effect, a certain amount of indecisiveness ensues.

Where? Now this is another easy one. Anywhere and everywhere! Put a spod there, faffing will happen. It's inevitable. I have noticed certain stronger effects however. I'm sure meetings are more prolonged and the committee attending faff longer in when they're at our house. Possibly this is related to comfy chairs and cushions being available to sit on, so the desire to stop dithering and finish the meeting just disappears. Cushions for Christmas for everyone else who has meetings then! I've also noticed the force 10 gale effect. It is never, ever possible to make a decision as to where to go for a drink, while still inside the nice, warm, comfortable restaurant. No, faffing has to happen somewhere cold. Particular favourites include street corners, where the wind has ample opportunity to whistle along at high speed, and just outside nice, alluring pubs that we could go into, if it were possible to reach a decision to do so.

I've also noticed an effect by which standing in something known as a

Square has at least a squaring effect on the time spent faffing. Maybe it's cubing, or preferably something mathematically much more complicated that would take a lot longer, and a lot more dithering, to work out. Whatever the equation, Leicester Square has an awful lot to answer for. And never take a spod to see Nelson's Column; he'll spend hours deciding on the best possible viewing angle, before changing his mind, as the light has changed by then. Both the time spent there, and the likelihood of the light changing are of course dramatically increased if an arctic storm is somehow managing to creep up the Thames, or if you have a larger number of spods to dither together. And it's not just London Squares. I've noticed the same danger in a few of the smaller squares we ventured into around Birmingham. (Unless that was the effect of the half-naked Mermaid statue. I'll leave you to decide on that one!)

Why? Now, as this is by far the most complicated question to answer, I'd like to leave it until last. If only, that is, I can think of any possible answer for the last question: How?

How? I suppose this is the time to explain fully to the uninitiated exactly what dithering looks like and how to recognise it. If I could, I'd also offer a whole series of tips on dithering avoiding and early warning faff prevention. However, I'm still not convinced that it's possible. Any hints you have, do send them in. I need your help!

Indecisiveness can be spotted from a distance on a street corner, (or a town square!) when you notice an immobile group of people. Unlike 'tourists' who can also be found in the same places and whose actions can easily be mistaken for faffing, a dither of spods has no hi-tech video cameras, no maps, guidebooks, or any tacky souvenirs. If there is technical equipment in sight, it is a Psion or palm machine, being used to calculate the exact place on the GPS that the spods are currently at, allowing them to then determine which of the possible 27 pubs around the outside of the square might be nearest. Said pub will of course then be disregarded, because one of the spods once knew someone who had a friend, whose cousin's best friend had thought about going there, but had heard from a

friend-of-a-friend that their great-aunt's step-son's ex-school-friend had decided he didn't feel like going to it.

Of course, if you've any sense, you aren't close enough to catch the above explanation. Go straight to the pub nearest them –- you should be safe from spod invasion. If you're out with a group of spods (I hope you have a good excuse!), dithering is much harder to avoid. I can only suggest what works for me —marrying the chairman and forcing him into decisions on pubs. This must then be sent out to all by email, in plenty of advance, so that everyone knows when, where, and what they're doing, at every point during the entire evening, before any of them go anywhere near possible faffing sites. However, as the 'marrying the chairman' bit has already been done, you'll have to think of your own solution.

I have also tried rushing straight to the nearest pub, restaurant, or whatever, and saying "This looks great," but somehow there is still always the need for a long and fruitless discussion before anyone can go through the door, into the nice warm building. If only a decent pub chain would install a network, preferably wireless, then hours of available dithering time could be saved. Or if not saved, then spent surfing indoors to check out what local venues we might want to move on to.

My only other suggestions for stopping spods dithering is to gag the lot of them and tie them together like a chain gang for all journeys between any two locations that cause indecisiveness. Unfortunately, that could get dangerous along busy town centre streets, so it might be best used for country areas, particularly where there is only one pub and there's nowhere for them to try to dither off to. It could get messy if they all tried to walk in different directions. The local casualty ward might find it somewhat odd to have twelve admissions all with ankles cleanly broken at exactly the same place, all because the front spod thought he spotted something dangerous like a tomato (see Eureka 35!), and tried to make a run for it!

I've managed to be very evasive in answering why spods faff, dither, and can't decide anything. Perhaps that's

my own form of indecision. But at least you're highly unlikely to be reading this in a drafty, cold street, or as you fade away from hunger… unless maybe you've been so absorbed in reading Eureka that you forgot breakfast and are now regularly missing your bus to work with the excitement of it all. ***(Often happens. Ed)*** I thought not. And if so, well, really, it's your own silly fault, you know! The warning about dithering in a difficult climate was very early on. You've only yourself to blame.

Again, a whole paragraph avoiding answering the difficult question. I'm getting rather good at this indecision stuff.

I also promised to come back to the question of whether increased technical ability leads to enhanced dithering skills. And we haven't yet looked at the possibility —even likelihood —that an increase in the number of spods available increases faffing time exponentially. Oh, OK, I give up; I'll try to find some answers!

Why, exactly, do spods dither? In order to work out the answer to this, I decided to study the decisions that do get made. I've noticed the one question that does get answered, within a normal amount of time is "Tea or coffee?" Although of course you can rely on a certain Mr Ruck to be awkward about that one. Everyone else manages to answer quickly and decisively. They're pretty good on "Milk?" and "Sugar?" In pubs, they can handle "Do you want a drink?" even if deciding what that drink should be can become something of a problem.

A careful search for a common denominator in these questions is that they're all easy questions. Not in the sense that "What do you want to eat?" is, or should be, an easy question. In the sense of that there aren't many possible answers, and the answers are mathematically easy.

Take "Tea or coffee?" as example 1. There are only two answers on offer, and most spods can decide between two things. Like "Run a large Acorn Show, that will be lots of hard work, and take up tonnes of our time: yes or no?" Simple for your average spod. "Milk?" again is a yes/no question. There's no need to think much and the possibilities are nicely limited. Even the slightly more complicated question "Sugar?" has a reasonably limited set of answers. The answer is usually a whole number between nought and ten. In fact, most spods only seem to have one sugar, or none, making it a nice binary question once again, like "Milk?" And I'm sure that's what's important here. I'm not sure why it is, but spods can answer questions with binary answers. As the basis of every computer, everywhere, ever, something about binary is special to the spod and questions that allow this sort of answer are computed quickly and efficiently. If there were only two restaurants in any given city, we'd be fine, if a little unlikely to get a table.

I'm now wondering if hex might be useful here. Would spods be capable of deciding between sixteen possibilities, simply because the computer also uses hex? If someone feels like compiling me a list of sixteen nice restaurants and pubs in the near vicinity of the Wakefield Show, I'll get back to you with the results of the experiment shortly after the event.

The binary theory certainly explains the ease of answering "Would you like a drink?" and the comparative complications of "What would you like to drink?" I mean, I've never found a bar with only two drinks choices. Nor one with a mere sixteen beverage options. I could hope to locate one with 64, if you think that might help? It also explains the complications of choosing a West End show, compared with the simplicity of the decisions on whether (or not) to attend Corrs concerts. I think we might be onto something here. I'm going to present all choices in computable values from now on! If absolutely necessary, I'll run through the options in pairs: "Chinese or Thai?" followed by "Chinese or pizza?" then "Pizza or curry?" until we finally get full agreement to go for the usual pizza.

This would also make sense of the possibility that technical skills lead to enhanced dithering ability, as the more a spod is in tune with his computer, the more their ability to make choices would be influenced by binary values. And the more spods there are around, the greater the need for questions to fit into the digital approach, so that even with everyone offering some sort of answer, the overall result is still only one of two possibilities.

The excess time taken by collective spods, is all that time for them to work through each and every combination pair, before reaching a decision. Which explains why, when picking a pub in London, a decision can sometimes be reached before closing time the following day, so long as we're a little low on committee members. Those who live in London particularly hinder the process, as firstly, they know more pubs, and so have more combination pairs, and secondly, they go and suggest these other pubs, meaning that everyone else has to reprocess their decision, including all the new data. Complicated stuff on a Saturday night!

Just to check my theory really worked, I put the question to Toby: "Can spods make simple, binary decisions?" You can tell what the two options are for the answer to this one… Toby said "Umm… maybe!"

Cartoons by Howard Read

Anyone's Guide To ARM Linux

Can't do everything you want with RISC OS but would rather avoid Windows? Paul Webb suggests adding Linux, with its attractive range of applications, instead.

Why ARM Linux? OK, I know what you're thinking. What's an article on ARM Linux doing in a magazine devoted to RISC OS? Well, the simple and rather pragmatic answer is that some wonderful applications are available for Linux that can usefully complement the armoury of any RISC OS user. Think for example of the GNU Image Manipulation Program (www.gimp.org) which is considered by many to be comparable to PhotoShop and you should get the general idea.

But seriously, Linux is worth considering as a complement to RISC OS if you want to use some wonderful apps without moving over to Windows. This article will therefore introduce you to Linux, explain why the author uses Linux and point you in the direction of some invaluable Linux resources.

Clarifying matters

As Linux is currently very fashionable, you will no doubt have come across expressions like *Red Hat*, *Mandrake* and *Debian*. These terms actually refer to some popular Linux 'distributions'. Although Red Hat and Debian are available for ARM machines, all the distributions that you may come across are essentially identical although there are differences in terms of software bundles, packaging systems and default installation programs. No doubt, you will also have seen the phrase *GNU/Linux*. Although many users just call their system *Linux*, GNU/Linux is actually the more accurate description because Linux refers to the 'kernel' while *GNU* refers to the GNU Project who have been responsible for developing many of the applications and utilities that have become associated with the OS like Emacs — an extensible editor written in LISP and C.

Why use Linux?

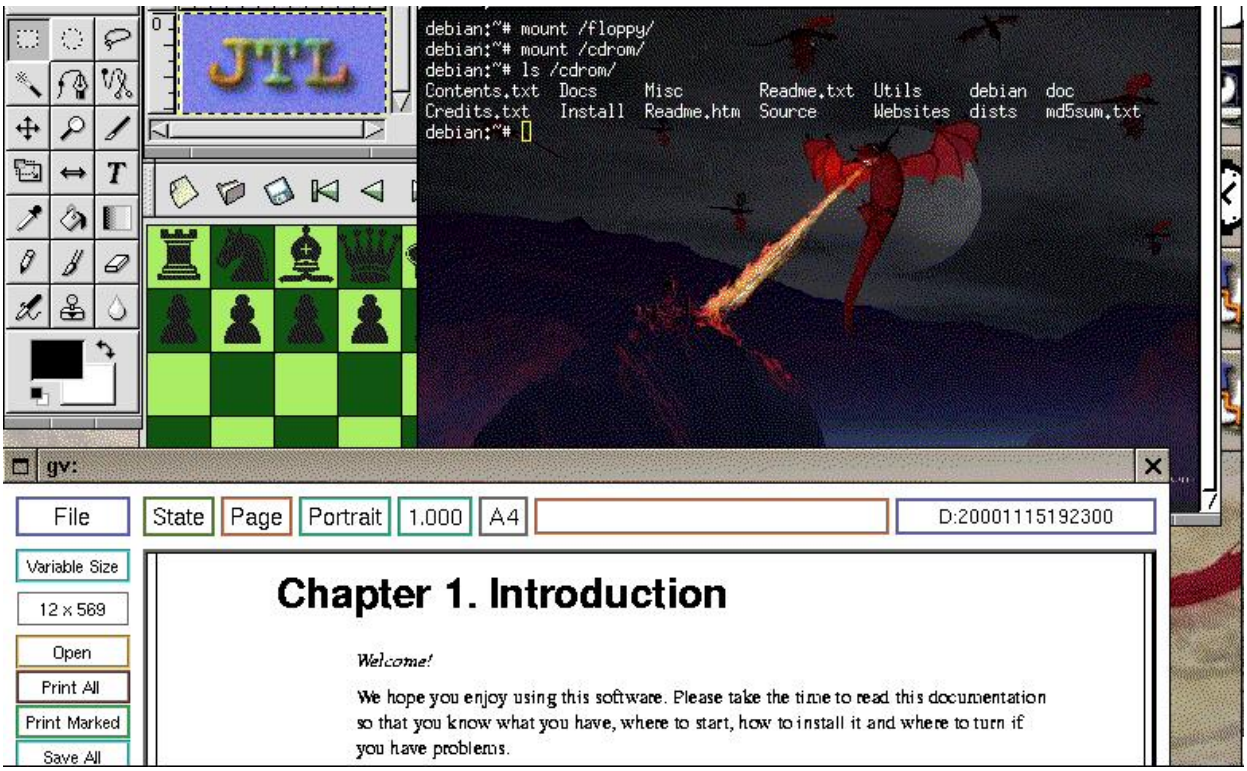
Perhaps the best reason for using GNU/Linux is that you have to use some utility that is not available on RISC OS. This writer frequently uses Linux to produce documents that have originally been marked up with SGML. Linux is consequently an attractive complement to RISC OS in the absence of an SGML-based typesetting system for our platform.

Moreover, Linux is a wonderful system to use because of the wealth of resources and technical advice which you can avail of for free. Not only will experts personally respond to a request for help (yes, it has happened to me) but you can also access some wonderful documentation of which a notable example is the series of documents provided by the Linux Documentation Project.

But perhaps the most important reason why I use Linux is that it is fun! As the software, documentation and kernel are developed for free, users and developers get involved with the project for altruistic rather than pecuniary reasons. The Linux 'community' is also very much a reality as it is on the RISC OS scene. Indeed, this community can be characterised by a very obvious *hacking* tendency where hacking broadly means learning to solve computing problems for yourself rather than immediately asking for help. The educative character of Linux is therefore very much in evidence as the Linux user base tends to be made up of people with at least some programming knowledge.

That said, many developers have been working to make GNU/Linux attractive to home and business users and as a consequence great strides have been made in this respect of late. You can now work with your favourite apps through a GUI (graphical user interface) as opposed to the traditional UNIX command line and can configure your system to suit yourself. Indeed, the total configurability of the system is what appeals to many users who can either choose to work through a GUI like KDE or GNOME or work from the command line by using a shell like Bash.

You can even use the *RISC OS on X* (ROX) file manager with Linux so that your initial encounters with the



A screenshot of Debian GNU/Linux running on a Risc PC

OS will be reminiscent of your favourite operating system (rox.sourceforge.net/).

In a similar vein, there are now many more user-friendly apps available for Linux than there used to be with the result that you can now use WYSIWYG word processors like AbiWord on your Linux box although this writer still prefers traditional UNIX tools like TeX! (see Eureka Issue 31, Autumn 1999).

The screenshot (above) will perhaps give you some idea of how removed from the command line Linux can be if that is what you want. What you are consequently looking at is Debian GNU/Linux running on my Risc PC with the Window Maker window manager, an eterm for typing commands at the shell, a snippet of Aleph One's *Guide to ARM Linux* as viewed through GV, GNOME Chess and the GNU Image Manipulation Program..

Linux is also distinctive in the sense that it is a multi-user operating system. In order to work on a machine running Linux, you will consequently be given a user account by the system administrator and will only be able to

read, write and/or execute files for which you have the appropriate permissions. Linux is therefore reasonably secure and makes sure that ordinary users cannot accidentally delete files from their system.

Further resources

I hope that this short article encourages you to try out Linux for yourself. Although you can download all relevant ARM Linux resources from the net (chocky.mine.nu/debian/DebianBF.html), a more viable alternative for most users is to purchase Aleph One's set of ARM Linux CDs for users with a Risc PC (www.aleph1.co.uk/armlinux). Indeed, Aleph One have put together a distribution of Debian Linux that takes most of the pain out of the installation process by providing partitioning utilities, binaries and documentation. In addition, you can also purchase a hard disc from them with ARM Linux pre-installed if you are not comfortable about doing the partitioning and installation process yourself. After you have successfully installed your new OS, you should then join the ARM Linux community by subscribing to the armlinux-newbie mailing list. You can join this list on-line at www.armlinux.org/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/armlinux-newbie.

Insofar as your continuing Linux education is concerned, check out www.ibiblio.org/mdw/index.html the site of the Linux Documentation Project. You can also obtain very valuable information from the GNU Project's web site (www.gnu.org) including information on open source licensing —a subject that may not be familiar to you.

www.plig.net/xwinman is also worth a visit if you want to check out the window managers that are available for Linux.

If you prefer printed magazines, take a look at Linux Format (www.linuxformat.co.uk), Linux Magazine UK (www.linux-magazine.co.uk) or the US-based Linux Journal (www2.linuxjournal.com/cgi-bin/frames.pl/index.html).

Good luck and welcome to the open source revolution!

You've Asked...

Our regular round up of some of the questions sent in and the answers given by our Technical Help Service, co-ordinated by David Ruck.

Kodak photo CD

Question:

I am trying to make use of a picture on a Kodak photo CD. It would appear that nothing I have in RISC OS can load it.

When I double click on a file Photodesk3 opens, but tells me it is "either not valid or an old format". They are all type *.PCD*. In the PC side of my RISC PC, the Kodak software only allows viewing or printing and I really want an electronic image to put into an Ovation Pro document.

Have you any suggestions? Is there a shareware program to read these files?

Charles Hope

Answer:

This is quite strange as PhotoDesk can normally load all PCD formats. Are there any errors if you try to copy the file from the CD to the hard disc?

!ChangeFSI can read PhotoCD images. The latest version is on www.riscos.com/ in the public download area. To choose the size of image you want to load, press F12 and type Set ChangeFSI$PCDIndex n where 'n' is 0 to 3.

Plus there is the original Acorn PhotoCD software !PhotoView which, comes with CDFS upgrades.

Another idea that comes to mind: why not bring up the image using the PC card, then switch the PC card to multitask, and then use !Paint or another RISC OS imaging program to do a screen grab. This would ensure a useable image in the screen colour depth/resolution to suit? Simple, I know, but it would work!

Coding forums

Question:

I enjoy using web forums from time to time and I'm wondering if you know where a hobbyist user like myself would be able to create/access forum facilities for use within a coding group of which I'm a member. Is there a service on the web that you know of?

Andrew Weston

Answer:

Many online community/forum sites exist. It's a matter of working out what kind of stuff you want, and who offers what. If the group your talking about is a *coding* group, then the best suited may well be SourceForge.net. They've got some features specifically aimed at collaborative programming, including version control, bug tracking etc.

(NB: Sourceforge is intended for open source projects, that is it's not suitable for commercial development. Read the terms & conditions.)

More traditional forum services are offered by the likes of Yahoo's Clubs feature and ezbord.com. These are online forums, with messages posted and visible on the Web.

More general mailing list services can be used as web forums but come with other add-ons like shared calendars and documents, photo organisation and a full email mailing list (as opposed to just Web read and post). Services include www.smartgroups.com www.topica.com and www.yahoogroups.com.

Work out what you want and take your pick.

Which discs?

Question:

I have an Acorn Risc PC. For sending to Apple Mac-users should I buy formatted discs? Or unformatted discs?

Kay Williams

Answer:

To transfer files to Macs you need to use either 720K or 1440K DOS format floppy discs. These can either be pre-formatted ones or blank ones which can be formatted by either the Risc PC or the Mac.

Club contacts

Email:

General queries	info@armclub.org.uk
Membership queries	membership@armclub.org.uk
Members' technical help	support@armclub.org.uk
Product sales	sales@armclub.org.uk
Magazine	eureka@armclub.org.uk
Software	products@amclub.org.uk

The ARM Club, Merton Court, 38 Knoll Road
Sidcup, Kent DA14 4QU

Telephone (higher rates):
General queries 07010 709849
Technical help line 07010 708098
Fax: 07020 954018

Web site: http://www.armclub.org.uk/

Published by The ARM Club

• Chairman: Toby Smith • Secretary: Chris Price
• Treasurer: Simon Burrows • Membership Secretary: Rilla Paterson
• Technical Help Co-ordinator: David Ruck
• Internet & Products Co-ordinator: Tom Hughes
• Open Days Advisor & Quartermaster: Ralph Sillett
• Open Days Organisation/Support: John Stonier
Discount Scheme Organiser: Rob Brown
• Without portfolio: Matthew Cook Martin Ebourne Mark Smith

Editor: Peter Jennings
© 2001 The ARM Club. All rights reserved

Benefits of membership

The national club for all users of 32 bit Acorn computers and Pocket Books

The ARM Club

- The Club's magazine, 'Eureka', written by members, is published and sent free of charge four times a year.
- Free software to accompany articles in Eureka is available on the Club's FTP site or can be sent to members on disc.
- Free Technical Help Service. We will do our best to solve any problems which you may have, by email, letter, telephone or fax.
- Special discounts for Club members from well-known companies.
- Regional open days and shows are regularly organised by the Club. Other events can be arranged on request.
- Special offers at shows and open days.
- Regional contact lists of other members, available on request.
- Opportunities to get involved in the running of the Club itself.
- School and Affiliate Membership available on request.
- Joining pack includes an extra copy of a recent issue of the magazine and software.

Annual membership £12 (+£3 joining pack for first year)
Europe £16 and rest of the world £19

The ARM Club, Merton Court, 38 Knoll Road, Sidcup, Kent DA14 4QU
Email: info@armclub.org.uk Tel: 07010 709849 (Flextel)