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NEWSLETTER NO 5 - SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1987

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EDITORIAL

Dear members, welcome to the fifth UAUG newsletter. I would like to start by wishing you all a happy birthday! Believe it or not we, the United Amstrad User Group, are one year old this month!

It was September 1986 when I first decided to start a user group, and there have been many changes since then, and looking towards the future, there are many changes to be made. Some of the changes that we hope to have implemented before the next issue are:-

- To use Stop Press to design the newsletters
- Concentrate more on the PD section
- Have many more regular sections
- Give the newsletter a new look and a name!

The last point was suggested by Don Snoad. He thought it would be a good idea if we actually had a name for the newsletters, instead of just calling them 'newsletters'. This is where I would like all members to help. If you can suggest a name for the new look newsletter, then I would be grateful if you could write and tell me. All suggestions will be considered.

While I'm on the point of you writing to me, I would like to point out that it is not always possible for me to reply personally to each letter. If your letter does require a reply then a SAE is essential. From now on replies will not be given to competition entires, articles and letters for publication and suggestions (eg for the newsletters name).

You will see written on the front of the newsletter envelope your 'NEW MEMBERSHIP NUMBER'. This number will replace your old one completely, due to the fact that the membership file has become out of sequenced and untidy. You will also notice that included in the envelope is a new application form and a questionnaire. I would be grateful if all members could spare five minutes to complete these documents and return them to me. It need only cost you 13p! These documents will help us immensely in the organisation of the club, and the questionnaire will give YOU a chance to tell me what you think of the UAUG, and how we could improve our serive.

As a little incentive to return the new membership application form and the questionnaire, the names of all members who return the forms will go into a box. Sometime in October two names will be pulled out and those two members will each receive a budget game!!!

You will also notice in this edition that we have managed to get many more discounts for you, making the list very extensive. There is also a new ordering system. If you require any goods then please order direct from the discount supplier, remembering to state in your letter that you are a 'United Amstrad User Group Member' and you MUST tell the supplier your membership number, or they may not supply the goods!!!

Before I end for this issue, I would just like to inform you of a few committee place changes. I am now the club Chairman and Seamus is the new Secretary. Unfortunately Paul had to leave, so the new Treasurer is Mick Freeman. Well I think that about wraps up my editorial for this issue. So until next time, happy computing...

CLUB NEWSNew Discount System

You may have read in the editorial about the new system, it should be used from now on when ordering goods. If you require any goods then send a letter to the discount supplier stating the goods you require. You must also state that you are a 'United Amstrad User Group Member' and include your membership number.

You should make the cheques payable to the supplier, for the price stated in the newsletter.

Book Library Warning

Due to the fact that hardly anyone has borrowed any books, we are considering closing the book library down. We are giving it to november, and if not many have been hired then I'm afraid it will have to close.

Stop Press will be used!

We have finally got Stop Press, the de-bugged version of Pagemaker. We will be using it to produce some pages of the newsletters but unfortunately it arrived too late to be used this time. I would like to thank K & M computers for loaning me stop press for a short time, so that we could decide whether or not it was worth buying.

More PD Please

We have decided to concentrate on the PD section of the club, so by next time we hope to have many discs full of software. Remember, if you have any programs that are Public Domain, then please, send them in!!!

House of the Rising Sun

I would like to thank Andy Turner, the sysop of this bulletin board for allowing the UAUG a small section. The board can be contacted on (0793) 641962, and it runs on 1200/75 viewdata. Andy uses his CPC464 to run the board.

Keep 'em Rolling

Thanks for all the contributions you have sent for the newsletter. Please keep them coming. We would like as many contributions as possible for the newsletters.

K & M Computers

My thanks also goes to Ken of K & M, for distributing membership details to all of his software hire members. Hopefully this will give the clubs membership a much needed boost. His address can be found on his advert, printed in this issue.

Cheetah Marketing Offer!!!

Cheetah have kindly offered all UAUG members free membership to their users club. There should be an application form enclosed, if by any chance there isn't then write to cheetah for details. Members of the club receive huge discounts on cheetah products. If you join via UAUG then there is no need to purchase a cheetah product, which is the usual requirement for membership.

THE NEWSLETTER EDITORS

Over the past few months we have had several new editors, who will be helping produce the newsletters. The four editors are:-

SIMON LINSSEN - Simon will be doing the serious section, appropriately named 'The Useful Bit'.

DON SNOAD - Don will be responsible for 'proof reading' the newsletters to check for spellings etc, as well as helping Simon produce the serious section.

TERRY ROBERTS - Terry will be doing the adventure column, to cater for all adventure fans!

LESLIE EDWARDS - Leslie, the last of the editors to join the UAUG is going to try and produce the 'Games Section'. His section will start from the next issue. Leslie asks for as much help as you can give him, in the form of reviews, complaints about games etc.

If you are interested in running a newsletter section then please don't hesitate to write. We need all the help we can get!

Remember all of the above editors need your contributions and letters to make their sections successful. Their addresses can be found towards the front of the newsletter.

HOW YOU CAN HELP WITHOUT BECOMING AN EDITOR

If you feel you can't spare the time to run a complete section, then you can help out in other ways. You could submit:-

- A once off article
- A letter, about any particular topic
- A type-in
- A Public Domain program for the PD library

If your article is particularly long, then I would be grateful if you could send it in on disc, this will save a lot of time. The disc will be returned.

MEMBERS LETTERSOFFICIAL AMSTRAD
SHOW: DISAPPOINTING!

ANDREW BYFORD
WRITES:-

After visiting the Official Amstrad Show this weekend, I feel I have to write and say how disappointed I was. For a start, Alexandra Pavilion was no match for the much classier Novotel Hotel, and where was the "ample parking" as advertised. Once inside, it looked as if the show had been taken over by utility and business products for the PCW and PC. There wasn't a single software house advertising new software solely for the CPC's. May be it is time there were two shows: one for the CPC's and one for the PCW's and PC'S.

I am glad to see the newsletter reviewing two new games, especially budget games. I hope you will concentrate on these because with much software costing £8 upwards, you can buy four or five equally good games and still get 1p change each time. Lastly I enclose a copy of the book, "The Amstrad Pentacle Adventure Creator". I hope you can hire it out to any budding advenurers you have as members.

EDITORS COMMENTS:-

I agree the show was very disappointing, I went in said hello to HSV, bought a printer, had a quick look round, and left! I'm glad you liked the reviews, we are planning to review many more in the future. Remember, if you buy the budget games off of us you can have much more change!

MY PD PLEA! IT IS
WORKING!

COLIN BAKER WRITES:-

With reference to your plea for some software for the PD section, as I mentioned in an earlier letter here is a disc containing the magazine index, which I have been compiling over the past few months. I have also enclosed a 'doc' file on the disc to explain the what and the wherefores of it all.

To put you in the picture the disc contains two sorts of files. Those suffixed with .BIN are for use within Masterfile III and can be directly loaded into that program. I have split the index into 3 files suitable for Masterfile. They are as follows:-

AMSMAG86.BIN
AMSMAG87.BIN
ODDMAGS.BIN

AMSMAG86.BIN covers the following dates:-

Amstrad Action:

Oct 1985 to Dec 1986

Amstrad Computer User:

Sept 1985 to Dec 1986

Computing with the Amstrad:

Jul 1985 to Dec 1986

AMSMAG87.BIN covers all the 1987 editions of the above magazines.

ODDMAGS.BIN covers all the other (non-Amstrad) magazines that I have bought over the last couple of years. I have included it on the off chance that someone may find it of use but it is not a comprehensive index - it contains only the magazines I have bought and of those not all the contents have been fully indexed - I have only included Amstrad specific articles or articles of general computing interest such as programming, hints and tips etc.

The index for the 1987 mags is bang up to date with the

August editions included and it is quite comprehensive. It itemises all the articles and features and also hints and tips, both technical and for games. In fact, the whole of the magazine contents except those items on the news pages. Not so the index for 85/86, I'm afraid, as it was done in haste to combat an ever mounting pile of magazines and initially I decided to leave out games reviews (other than those for games that I possessed) and also cheat pokes etc. Also my ability to accurately summarize an article was not as good then and so you have lots of general headings such as CP/M, without actually going into any great detail. However, I am now rectifying those omissions and editing of the 85/86 index is now under way. I will, of course let you have it when it is ready.

For those who do not have Masterfile III I have included on the disc the files in ASCII format for use with a word processor. These are in, hopefully, manageable chunks and the file names reflect their contents, ie:

MAGS861.TXT +
 MAGS862.TXT +
 MAGS863.TXT +
 MAGS864.TXT =
 AMSMAG86.BIN

MAGS871.TXT +
 MAGS872.TXT +
 MAGS873.TXT =
 AMSMAG87.BIN

ODDMAGS1.TXT +
 ODDMAGS2.TXT =
 ODDMAGS.BIN

Well I trust that these files will be of use to the club members. If anyone should spot any of the inevitable errors I would appreciate being informed so that I can correct them, as I also would if anyone has any further ideas on the format etc.

As a further help perhaps, I can produce specific indices to suit individual needs. For example if someone just wanted an index for some copies of, say, Amstrad Action mags, I could produce an index for just the addition they had.

EDITORS COMMENTS:-

Thanks very much for the files, I'm sure someone will find a use for them. If anyone does spot any errors etc, and would like to contact Colin, his address is: 3 Fullerton Close, Weston, Southampton, Hants, SO2 9JP. The files are now available from the PD library.

GOOD ADVICE

TERRY ROBERTS
 WRITES:-

I feel that you might get a better response for your appeal for editors if you listed sections that you want to include. It's not really clear whether you want to set up new sections or spread the work load of the existing mag.

Assuming you want to expand, new sections could include:

- (1) Product News: Hardware
- (2) Product News/New Releases: Software
- (3) Show Reports (ask anyone who has attended)
- (4) Adventure Column, etc.

To my mind, you have to decide what UAUG is all about. Many of your discounts are not as good as the glossy mags so I feel the User Group should aim to put members in touch with each other. How many members are there? You could encourage members to write letters and one-off articles by offering a small prize for the best contribution.

EDITORS COMMENTS:-

I'm glad someone has at last shown their true thoughts about the club. It's about time I knew what you, the members, actually think about UAUG. The club presently has well over 100 members, but this figure is rising all the time. I have taken note of some of the points mentioned in this letter, as you will see from one of the articles.

HIRE BEFORE YOU BUY?

BY TERRY ROBERTS

UAUG members may be interested in a software hire company that I have used recently. K and M Computers in Skelmersdale (phone 0695 29046) have an extensive list of Amstrad cassette and disc software for hire. Hire charges are as little as 75p for two weeks, with disc software around £2 a time depending on cost. They add to the list regularly and appear to have an extensive membership. There is no joining fee and my experience with them has been very good.

K and M are also interested in buying second hand software to add to their lists so it may be useful to contact them about this as well.

THE COPYRIGHT DEBATEELIZABETH JANSON
WRITES:-

So great to see you all at the Alexander Palace show last week. We went on the Saturday, enjoyed the 'Australian heat' of the pavillion, and were disappointed at the lack of new goodies - also the disappearance of some goodies we saw as Hammersmith in January. We had fun, bought blank discs for £17.50 for 10, and the boys got some games. Penny got her Mini Office II for £12 and generally we chatted to many folk. Now to the enclosed disc.

This contains the programs in the 6128 manual. As everyone owns a copy of these listings, surely within the club they are "Public". Spelling is my own variation of an adaption from another machine.

I have also seen a version of this in "Computing with the Amstrad" (July 1985), since I got to England and purchased the back numbers of this very enjoyable magazine. I notice that Steve Lucas does not acknowledge his source.

This point introduces the topic of this letter - COPYRIGHT. I made two pages of notes when I got the Newsletter No 4, and will try to organise my ideas more clearly.

I have listed the names of over 100 games printed in the three English magazines for Amstrad owners. Last year I spent a lot of time typing listings into my 6128 - had to leave it in Australia this year. I brought my discs with me and local shops let me use their machines when I ask nicely. When I study the listings in the magazines I have bought this year, I notice some are adaptations (eg Steve Lucas' Jumbo Word Game), some are extensions of earlier ideas and many.....

..... include routines also used in other listings.

Careful study of the magazine suggests a listing is infringing copyright if it

(i) is sold twice or offered for sale after being sold once and

(ii) is claimed as your own when you have copied a listing without even changing line numbers or variable names.

A "big deal" in two of the magazines is their "cheat mode" - some code to alter someone else's presumably copyright game. So changing someone's listing is "OK".

Another theme in the magazines is "Chat about Games". Sometimes these are described as "clones" of another similar game. The most obvious use of the word "clone" is in describing Amstrads new computers as being very similar to a bigger brand name. If Amstrad can clone then clones are "OK".

So I conclude that the listings on my Australian discs are copyright if they are word for word from the original magazine listing. Does it follow that the listing is not copyright once I have altered the coding so the program

(i) achieves the same result using a different routine?

(ii) has enhanced graphics and/or sound

(iii) has additional routines such as score systems added? To use the language of the magazine I would say these would be "clones" of the original listing and therefore "OK".

A second problem arises when parts or routines are combined to produce another result. The bandicooted parts seem to be not covered by copyright although the resulting magazine listings are copyright. Isn't it true that machine code is made up of lots of routines strung together like beads? The resulting necklace is copyright, the beads are not.

A third problem involves using ideas from books and then creating a program the idea sparked. Name of day for a date is one formula that springs to mind, another is the survival of surnames routine based on family history statistics. Does copyright mean these sources should be acknowledged? My own graph plot routine is an example - someone else got "my program" into print and hence copyright in Australia - we both need the same mathematics text on polar graphs also called "beetracks" or "bee's dance".

So I enclose my disc with it's "clones", "offshoots" and "sparks". Hope others can also enjoy them.

EDITORS COMMENTS:-

Some very interesting points have been brought out from this letter. Anyone care to show their views on the subject? The 'Australian Disc' is now available in the PD library.

Phillip St John-Cullen has sent another small one liner this month. This small program converts between Centigrade and Farenheit.

```
10 CLS:INK 0,0:PRINT"TEMP. CONV.":PRINT:
PRINT"1. C To F":PRINT"2. F To C":LOCATE
1,7:INPUT">",a:INPUT"TEMP>",B:IF a=1 THEN
C=B/0.555+32:PRINT CINT(c),"F":FOR a=1
TO 3000:NEXT:RUN ELSE IF a=2 THEN
c=(b-32)*0.555:PRINT CINT(c),"C":FOR a=1
TO 3000:NEXT:RUN
```

6128 INTO 464 WILL GO!!!
By John Carver (1087)

I bought an Amstrad 464 a couple of years ago thinking, all I needed to do to turn it into a 6128, was add a disc drive and the extra memory. I was wrong.

When finances permitted I bought the add-on's, but I was still not able to run 6128 games and utilities, I was having to think carefully about syntax when using RSX's such as |ERA and I was restricted to only 6 add-on ROM's.

Before rushing out and buying a 6128 I decided to investigate the real difference between the two machines. I was pleased to find that all I needed to do, to upgrade my trusty Arnold with all of its extra's, was to change the internal Basic interpreter Rom, for the similar item, as fitted to the 6128.

A helpful chap at C.P.C. Ltd. (Tel: 0772 555034), relieved me of twenty quid, in exchange for a ROM part No. 40025 (a genuine Amstrad spare part).

I carefully ripped open the case of a good mate's Arnold, (you don't think I would be so daft as to carry out the conversion on my own without practising first?). It was quite obvious that the ROM that needed replacing, was the one marked 40009. It was sitting in an IC socket which made it simple to replace. I unplugged 40009, in went 40025, quickly bolted the case together, and the conversion was complete in under ten minutes.

I will admit that I felt a bit tense before switching the power on, but I need not have worried, the computer signed itself on as a AMSTRAD 128K Microcomputer (v3), Basic 1.1, etc. The transformation was complete, it was tested by loading 'The PAWN', no problems. Even commands such as |ERA, "*.BAK" worked.

I had a slight problem when converting my own Amstrad, it is a version 'B' (marker on the base of the computer). The 40009 ROM is soldered in place on this version, so I had to recruit the help of a friend, experienced in electronics, to replace the ROM with an IC socket, into which I place the new ROM.

My conversion is about 6 weeks old at the time of writing, and I have experienced no problems to date (except what to call my Arnold, it is a 464 or a 6128?).

A word of warning to anyone wishing to attempt this conversion. It will invalidate your warranty, and if it goes wrong, I didn't tell you to do it!

To those who wish to convert the Arnold's in this way, but don't feel up to it, I am sure that the conversion is simple enough for a computer repair shop to do, at a reasonable price.

A QUESTION OF FORMAT
By Don Snoad

The computing industry is perhaps the only industry that has its own interpretation of the word 'format'. e.g, disc format. In the photographic and publishing industries, 'format' is commonly used in its more traditional sense to indicate orientation of a regular image. In that context, a rectangular image standing on one short side is referred to as a Portrait Format, and when standing on one long side is described as Landscape format.

Almost all computer business software (with the possible exception of spreadsheets) is designed to present information in a portrait format. Yet the computer monitor screen itself is always in landscape format, with the result that less than half of a page of text can be displayed at any time.

How long will it be before computer designers wake-up to this fact and turn the monitor screen through 90 degrees to give us a more practicle and far more useful display in portrait format.

Of course the games playing fraternity will always prefer the landscape format, probably because it equates more easily to commercial television and cinema screens. But business software was born long before computer games and has always been configured for portrait format, so why is it that monitors have always been produced with the landscape format? Does anyone know? Does anyone care? The UAUG would welcome your views (no pun intended !)

* * * * *

THE NEW AMENDMENT TO THE COPYRIGHT ACT
By Nicholas Mutton

Many young people feel that the price of computer games, led to the copyright laws on discs and tapes being flouted. Young children who are caught copying software are risking more than they think, not only would their parents be liable to pay fines, but they can also be taken into care.

The penalties out now against them seem to be exessive, for there will be cases where copying in contravention of the provision, may ground an order for putting a child in the care of the local authority.

There were complaints too, about the methods software companies use to protect their software. Firebird's Elite users (for example) use a system called lenslock. When you buy a copy of the games, you are given a plastic lens. Every time you run the program a pair of random numbers are generated and they appear jumbled on the screen. The lens enables the person playing the game to be able to see what the numbers are, and after he or she has typed the two numbers in, the games will then run

GETTING TO KNOW YOU
by Don Snoad

The history of a program will often indicate the reasons for some of its features or limitations. A program having a small file capacity may well have been written for a computer with a very small memory, and there are often constraints with a disc-based program because it was originally developed for use with tape. For example, the Brunword word processing program features a rather unique method of storing files or blocks of text in memory, which can be accessed and called to the screen whilst working on the current document. This program feature was developed to provide fast access to data which otherwise would need to have been laboriously obtained from tape. Today, Brunword is a disc-based program for the CPC6128, yet that feature is still present. Similarly, that simple and very enjoyable little program 'word perfect' is currently marketed on disc for the CPC6128, yet its file capacity is only 20K, which is the maximum file size more appropriate to the CPC464 for which the program was originally developed. On the other hand, Protext and Tasword avoid any criticism by marketing different versions for tape and disc.

Problems can sometimes arise when a program developed for a particular computer is re-marketed for a different computer; in the process of conversion, an aspect unique to one computer may inadvertently be overlooked with the result that the re-vamped program may not be all that it was intended to be. A program in this category is pendown, originally marketed for the BBC computer but now available for the Amstrad CPC6128. Mini-Office II is another program that is marketed for different computers and is the same program on tape and disc. A spin-off effect of many programs not originally designed as disc-based, is their incompatibility with peripherals such as the dk'tronics silicon disc and some will not run whilst an external ROM board is connected. Obviously, the more you know about a program's history and development, the more success you are likely to have with using it.

COMPETITION TIMEAnswers to July/August Competition

The winner of last issues competition was Paul White who got all 10 answers correct and won himself a Gunshot Joystick. The runner up with only one answer wrong was Robert Taylor, who won the game 'A View to a Kill'.

The ten answers were:-

- 1) Amstrad is an Acronym.
True, it stands for Alan Micheal Sugar TRAding.
- 2) BASIC stands for Beginners All purpose Symbolic Introduction Code.
False, it is Instruction instead of Introduction.
- 3) Pascal is a low level language.
False, like BASIC it is high level.
- 4) cps stands for Counts Per Second.
False, cps stands for Characters Per Second.
- 5) The Amstrad tape unit can usually work at either 1000 or 2000 baud.
True, although there are programs to speed this up.
- 6) A nibble is four bits.
True, a nibble is a small byte!
- 7) The pixel resolution in mode 2 is 640 x 200.
False, try typing PLOT 640,400.
- 8) First Generation computers used transistors.
False, second generation used transistors, the first used valves.
- 9) The Amstrad 6128 can only access 64k of RAM at once.
True, thats all the Z80 CPU can handle at any one time.
- 10) CAM stands for Computer Aided Maintenance.
False, it stands for Computer Aided Manufacture.

September/October Competition

+++ WIN: The game ENDURO RACER +++
(Great fun for everyone)

All you have to do this time is answer the five questions below. Send your entry on a POSTCARD clearly stating your five answers, your name, address and your NEW membership number. All the questions require one word answers.

- 1) Which Company markets Enduro Racer?
- 2) What is the minimum amount of RAM necessary to run CP/M+?
- 3) Name another operating system, apart from CP/M.
- 4) Name another High Level language, apart from BASIC.
- 5) Who wrote the BASIC language used in the Amstrad CPC's.

Well I wish everyone good luck with this competition, don't forget to read the editorial to find out all about the other two competitions in this issue.

Title: Dizzy
 S/House: Code Masters
 Price: £2.99
 Type: Arcade
 Micro: All CPC's

In this game you play a cute little egg thing called (surprise) Dizzy and he has undertaken to destroy the evil KATMANDU, a nasty kind of guy, who makes it rain every sunday, during cricket (among other things).

The lay out of the screen and representation of things is very nicely done, and the character called dizzy has got to be the funniest little character yet in a game. The way he rolls around is great fun to watch, without actually playing the game. For those people who do want to play, the screen border is quite exelent, with a Dizzys in the top corners.

The sound only just passes, but at least it's there (Elite, please take note!!).

Everything about this game is amusing, even the inlay card has been cleverly plotted to mock the average adventure story.

This game is worth £3 of anybody's money !

Scores out of 20

Graphics:	15	Sound:	14	Playability:	16
Value:	16	UAUG Rating:	15		

Title: Mission Jupiter
 S/House: Code Masters
 Price: £2.99
 Type: Arcade
 Micro: All CPC's

I must admit to not having played this game thoroughly enough to give it a fair review, but that is hardley my fault, because I rarely do things that don't appeal to me (if I don't have to).

The title is very well designed, but that is were the enjoyment stops. The inlay card shows action packed screen shot with buildings and missiles all over the place. This may well await the game player, but he/she has got to get passed a stageringly boring begining, there is no change for ages and then to make up for it they have put spaceships that bounce up and down in your way, the unoriginality of it was a real let down.

On the inlay card, it says 'Fantastic Smooth Scrolling', that is the only good thing I can say with all honesty about this game, the scrolling is good.

The sound is nothing to get exited about either.

The only reason I am so brash with this game is the fact, that they can release these games so close together and yet there is so much technical difference. To be fair Mission Jupiter is the type of game you expect to get for £3.

Graphics:	12	Sound:	9	Playability:	7
Value:	10	UAUG Rating:	10		

 HARDWARE REVIEW
 By Tom Houghton

Title: EPROM Programmer
 Supplier: John Morrison (Micros)
 Price: £34.95
 Micro: All CPC's

Having had the dubious honour of purchasing the first unit for the Amstrad CPC464, I can at least claim to have field tested the unit for the supplier.

Several original bugs have been removed, and the unit is now supplied with much improved 'Menu driven' software.

Programming of BASIC programs is simple but time consuming though the actual EPROM "blowing" is fast, only 4 minutes for 16k.

No separate supply is needed as the unit simply plugs into the rear socket and draws its power from the computer.

The EPROM must be plugged into the unit then the unit plugged into the computer before switching on the computer, the supplier fitted a switch to my unit to allow the EPROM to be inserted/removed with the computer switched on, it is not known if the switch is now fitted as standard, if it is not then it should be! A ZIF socket (which clamps the pins using a lever) would be a decided advantage even at a small extra cost as it is only too easy to damage the EPROM pins especially during removal, an expensive accident at £2.75 to £4.50 for an EPROM!

2764 (8K) and 27128 (16K) EPROMs are catered for, and the manual, a poor set of duplicated sheets, gives further guidance on programming of Machine Code or Binary programs for the EPROM.

While some knowledge of machine code is desirable it is not essential since the menu-driven software is self explanatory and easy to use via the function keys.

It is possible to combine several short programs into one program using a menu selection basis, I have successfully compiled two 16K EPROMS using about 16 short RSX programs making these instantly available (though not all at the same time depending on addresses), an extremely valuable aid to programming and debugging.

One important note: MAKE SURE THE PROGRAM WORKS BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO BLOW ONTO AN EPROM. Any errors cannot be immediately corrected as the EPROM must be ERASED by UV light before reprogramming can take place, it is better to have a couple of spare EPROMs just in case. John Morrison offers an erasing service for 50p per EPROM plus postage.

All in all this is a simple and economical unit, and in conjunction with a Sideways Romboard offers a good alternative to the disc drive at about half the cost (excluding cost of EPROMs), a recommended Romboard will be reviewed in the next issue.

Value for money: 9 Ease of use: 8 Manual: 5 Overall rating: 8

(1)

THE USEFUL BIT

By Simon Linssen, 13 Furzedown Road, Highfield, Southampton,
Hants, SO2 1PN.

Welcome to the launching of a new section following on from the first birthday of UAUG; (bless 'em all!). I joined the group several months ago and then I met this frog by a pond.....And I thought S.A.E. was a mail order arrangement until I met UAUG. Software Applications Editor seems appropriate for stewardship of a section which we hope is going to grow and grow, helped largely by the groups membership. Plans are afoot to cover many aspects of the "serious" side of having a CPC as a close friend. These will include:

- * Software Reviews
- * Hardware Reviews
- * Hints & Tips (well you never know)
- * Experiences and ideas on program applications (you tell me)
- * Anything useful, useless, interesting or frivolous which ought to be shared. Let me know!

Simon Linssen
S.A.E.

* * * * *
* Software Reviews

WORD PROCESSING

A series of reviews of various word processing packages is planned over the coming months, to be undertaken by Don Snoad a Southampton-based member. Don has a keen interest in this area which is generally acknowledged as the premier raison detre for business-based micros. Does UAUG follow the pattern or is the lure of "Mutant Blurtozoids" reckoned a better zap? Write to us with ideas, problems, queries.

* * * * *
* Software Reviews

DOGS LIFE

Colin from Nemesis wrote me a nice letter in which he mentioned he would back BONZO SUPER MEDDLER in a bunfight with any utility of the same ilk. Now I own DISCOVERY PLUS, a tape to disc transfer program; (an essential tool if you recently upgraded from 464 to 6128). Several programs resisted any amount of wrestling with Siren's D.Plus. So far B.S.M has dealt with nearly all of them.
Good dog !

TRANSFER UTILITIES

- * Multiface II vs. Mirage Imager III. Which one would you back up ? One of them claims 100% success. We at UAUG know otherwise. No doubt so do you. Any comment ?
- * Nemesis offers £2 discount on B.S.M. in exchange for Discovery Plus discs. Is this war?

THE USEFUL BIT

Tas-Sign The Sign Maker
Tasman Software: £29.95

Funny thing this one. You hear of a program that can print notices in a variety of sizes. You think that there are dozens of programs, even some good type-ins capable of this kind of stuff. Not quite right, even by a long way. Tas-Sign is a sophisticated printing program offering stacks of features which together create enough variation to suit many different uses. My house is now draped with signs, banners and declarations; including a four-foot long (none too polite) comment on a certain member of the family in the bathroom. Patience is a necessity for the latter example; it took 20 minutes to print.

The program is unusual, coming from the Tasman stable in that it runs under CPM. This is not known as the cuddliest and loving of operating systems. This case was no exception and I managed to annoy it by disobeying orders ie doing the wrong thing at the wrong time with the resultant dreaded freeze-up. Being less kind to myself, the program is not idiot-proof!

Nevertheless, if you do as you're told and pay attention to the 30 page instruction booklet then assembling and printing small (and large) masterpieces is a lot of fun, and potentially very useful. Four different fonts are on offer, more if you count italics, reverse shading, underlining etc. Character size and width are adjustable and further clever options offer a choice of letter spacing including "kerning" - automatic variable spacing between letters for those with a heightened sense of aestheticism. Printing can be done using 8 shading patterns and several choices of density, double strike etc. A final added touch to the finished work of a border (in variable width and shades of course) is available. If you can stand the wait, some very professional crisp looking finished effects are possible.

Creation of the work on-screen will present no problems to Tasword users; editor and embedded commands use familiar key combinations. Simple word-processing facilities make the whole construction process much more convenient.

Final printouts can be horizontal across the the page or vertically down the page for those monster messages. Tasman suggest that in their own tests damage to the print head was not in evidence. Far be it from me to suggest that if you plan to produce a declaration from the heart for Jasmine next door in impressive 6 inch letters that you have a fire extinguisher ready!

There are several artwork-style programs around in this kind of price range; some can be argued to have many more facilities, where my only question must relate to their usefulness. It is easy to ponder over the practical applications of Tas-Sign. Try it yourself. You may decide that flogging your car/bike or the Church Fete will never be the same again!

WHICH WORD PROCESSOR

I am often asked "Which is the best word processor?". It is rather like asking "how long is a piece of string?"; so much depends upon what you want it for. In my judgement, the 'best' word processing package is Sentinel's Word Perfect, but as it costs around £450 I think it unlikely that UAUG members will go for it. (No it isn't the same program as the Word Perfect by Supersoft). On a more viable level, one's choice will or should be influenced by the tasks anticipated and a lot will depend upon the importance you attach to certain word processing features.

For my purposes, I need a program that:

1. has an uncomplicated command structure;
2. is fast and simple to use;
3. provides reliable basic facilities such as unrestricted page formatting (including headers, footers and page numbering), unlimited block manipulation, search and replace and file merge;
4. has a RH justification feature that injects spaces equally to give a well balanced appearance to the finished text;
5. provides a sensible range of cursor and text scrolling commands;
6. gives me an informative on-screen status window; and
7. gives me absolute control over my choice of printer.

Although these features amount to a fairly undemanding specification, there are a few low-budget programs that meet my requirements, especially the justification parameter; but, for what it's worth, I regard Protext (Amsdos or CP/M+ version) as unquestionably the best program available in the low-budget league, with Pyraword and Brunword the nearest. Brunning's latest upgrade has changed my preference. But then not everyone has the same priorities, and some users will be served well enough by one of the more elementary programs such as Pendown. One fact, which surprises many people, is that almost all the programs that are worth considering are all in the same price range regardless of whether they are elementary or comprehensive. It is also a fact, that personal preference will often influence one's choice of program regardless of any assessment based solely on technical features.

Because there is no easy answer to this question, I am preparing a survey of all the word processing programs available for the Amstrad and, hopefully, the survey will be published in the UAUG Newsletter. If you can't until then, take a long hard look at Protext (£27/£40), Pyraword (£18), Brunword (£25), Tasword (£25), Pendown (£20) and Mini-Office II (£20), but don't waste your money on Easi-Amsword, Microword, Screenscript or Textproc. The least expensive program currently on offer is Supersoft's Word Perfect; it is an efficient and easy-to-use program and is in my view much underrated - it is available from the Home User Computer Club, Swindon SN1 5XD, for the unbelievably low price of £3.75 (a comparable Database called Instant Recall, also by Supersoft, is available from the same source for £4).

WHAT-YOU-SEE-IS-WHAT-YOU-GET or is it?

What-you-see-is-what-you-get, often abbreviated to WYSIWYG, is an expression intended to convey a standard by which word processing programs are sometimes judged, relative to the program's ability to display the text on screen exactly as it will be printed. Unfortunately, there are variations of the standard, in that different reviewers have different interpretations as to what constitutes WYSIWYG. Many reviewers will describe a program WYSIWYG if the text is displayed on screen according to preset margin and tab settings, or formats correctly in response to a margin justification command. Perhaps I am a purist, but those features alone do not, to me, constitute a full WYSIWYG standard.

I consider a program is truly WYSIWYG only if the screen is capable of displaying every text and page formatting feature the program provides, including subscript, superscript, underlining, italics, boldface, alternative character sets and foreign language characters.

The only low budget WP program that approaches true WYSIWYG is LocoScript, and the only other runner up in the WYSIWYG league is Tasword, with Brunword following up close behind; no other low budget word processor for the Amstrad displays true subscript or superscript, let alone other features, so why is it many of them are described as being WYSIWYG? Is it because the reviewing journalist doesn't really understand, or because the copywriter has been inaccurately briefed. Either way, the reader (the potential buyer) is being misled into thinking that the program is to a standard which it is not. For some prospective buyers, such as scientific and technical writers, true WYSIWYG may be very important; it could be just as important to other writers for different reasons. The work of linguists and translators may also be dependent on true WYSIWYG display. Yet there is a seemingly flexible standard which can be bent to bias a review or advertisement in a program's favour.

This is just one aspect of a rapidly growing number of complaints from buyers about misrepresentation and the only too obvious implications under the Trade Descriptions Act. Another important aspect is program bugs, the existence of which are often dismissed as an acceptable hazard in any program. But are they acceptable? If a bug seriously impairs the performance of a program, is that program fit for the purpose for which it was sold? Such questions are rarely answered honestly and publicly. Then there's the out going saga of error-ridden user documentation. Meanwhile, the computing industry and publishing houses, that depend upon that industry do nothing, and the software jungle thrives.

If you have cause for complaint about any software (not only a word processor), why not put the fact before the UAUG?

THE ADVENTURE COLUMN

By Terry Roberts

'Woodlands', Church Road, Harrietsham, Kent, ME17 1AP.

Welcome to the first of what will hopefully be a regular column of news and information about all aspects of Amstrad CPC adventuring. The content of the column will largely depend on what you as UAUG members are interested in, so do write in to 'Adventure Column'.

First steps

If you are new to the adventure scene the two basic things you need to know are which adventures to start on and where to get help in the form of hints, tips or even a complete solution so that you can see how the game should be solved.

Useful information on the range of adventures available together with some guidance on which to tackle first was given in the 'Pilgrim's column in the August issue of AMSTRAD ACTION. He listed ten games worth trying, ranging in price from £1.99 (cassette) to £24.99 (disc), so it is clear from the start that prices vary a great deal. For £20 plus the quality of software is first class since at that price you are buying Infocom or Magnetic Scrolls (eg The Pawn). Some Level 9 compilations are also around £20 on disc. However, there is also some good software at budget prices (as well as some rubbish!).

A set of adventures not mentioned by the Pilgrim is the Arnold Blackwood collection by Nemesis. These can be bought direct from Nemesis in Kettering or from Advantage user group which advertises in the Amstrad magazines. There are four games for the CPC on tape or disc and they are excellent value as a place to start. Begin with the Trial of Arnold Blackwood as this is easy to map (the most important starting point is to wander about to get a feel for the game and then make a map). It is also the most straightforward of the four games. There are hint sheets available for all four games supplied when you buy.

Another game recommended for beginners which I have not yet tried is Mindshadow by Activision. This has a 'tutorial' which teaches the basics of how to play a graphic adventure in addition to the game itself.

So much for getting started. When you get stuck and need some help there are plenty of options. The adventure columns of the monthly mags often have lists of contacts with a list of completed games and you can contact someone directly for help. If or when you get the adventuring bug you need a more regular "fix" of clues and news and that comes in the shape of a monthly mag devoted entirely to computer adventures. More about this next time.....

CLASSIFIED ADVERTS

GENUINE ORIGINAL SOFTWARE FOR SALE

Protext (disc), The Ultimate Amstrad Word-Processor - £15.

Amsword (tasword) on tape, with instruction on how to transfer to disc - £5.

Tape Games: Herberts Dummy Run, Glenn Hoddle Soccer, 3D Grand Prix, Blockbusters, Hacker & Gyroscope - All £1 Each.

WANTED

The instruction book for MAXAM (on ROM), I do own the original. I will negotiate a price, or deal with software etc.

Contact: John Carver on Romsey (0794) 513812

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A.D.A.M. A Disassembler and Monitor - £8

The Image System, a means of creating drawings and pictures for further use, or even printing out on to paper via a printer. - £10

Deactivators, this is a game, where the player must travel through all the rooms in a large, and deactivate all the bombs in the place, and activate some of your own, which are triggered as soon as someone walks in through the door. - £9

or all 3 programs £24.00. All the above are on disc.

For further details please ring (01) 868-9884 or if you wish to purchase any software, then please send your Cheque or Postal Order to:

N.D. Mutton, 16 Ferncroft Avenue, Eastcote, Ruislip, Middlesex, HA14 9JF

Would another member kindly loan me for a short period, the instructions for

"REMBRANDT" and "DRAUGHTMEN"

I have the originals in their cases, not copies!

Also, I have for sale the following cassette based software:-

Ghostbusters	-	£4
Vera Cruz	-	£5
Mini Office II	-	£8

Contact: John Stanford, 4 High Walk, Fareham, Hants, PO15 6BS.

MAGAZINES FOR SALE

I have 44 monthly computer magazines that I wish to sell, and I am willing to sell them for £1 each or £30 for all 44 magazines, and the others mentioned at the end of the advert are included or 40p each.

The magazines I have are:-

Amstrad Action:-

1985 November, December
 1986 March, April, May, June, July, August,
 September, October, November, Christmas
 1987 February, May, August

Amstrad Computer User:-

1985 September, December
 1986 January, February, March, April, May, June,
 July, August, September, October, November
 1987 January, February, March, April, May, August

Computing with the Amstrad:-

1986 January, February, May, June, July, August,
 September, October, November
 1987 February, May, June

I have 44 of the above monthly magazines, and various other such as Popular Computing Weekly, Amtix and Your Computer.

Contact: Nicholas Mutton, 16 Ferncroft Ave, Eastcote, Ruislip,
 Middlesex, HA4 9JF

Can any member advice me on how to program
 EXTENSION ROMS ie those second ROMS
 necessary if the program exceeds 16k in
 length.

Contact: Tom Houghton
 20 Cloverdale Gardens
 Newcastle upon Tyne, NE7 7QJ

I am having difficulty with 'LASER GENIUS'
 from Ocean. Can anyone help me change
 Source code into Machine code in simple
 steps.

Philip St John-Cullen, 21 Mascalls Park,
 Paddock Wood, Kent, TN12 6LW.

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Hit Pack Six	£7.99	£11.95	Exelon	£6.99	£11.95	Head over Heals	£11.75
5 Star Vol 2	£7.99	£11.95	Wizball	£6.99	£11.95	Datafile I	£25.95
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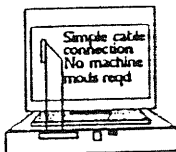


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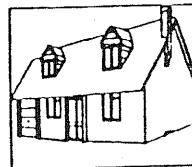


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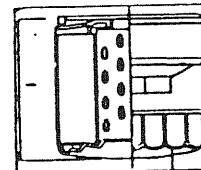
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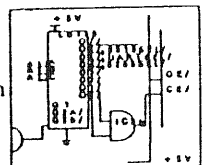
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PUBLIC DOMAIN SECTION

You will notice that we have quite a few more programs for you this month. I would like to thank everyone who has sent something in for the library, and please, keep the contributions rolling in!

If you are going to send a program in the please could you also send a documentation file in along with it. This can be typed in standard ASCII, ie from most word processors. The .DOC file should explain what the program does and how to use it, as well as any hint's and tip's for the users.

If you would like a copy of any of the discs, then please fill in an application form and send it together with a SAE and a formatted disc (or blank tape). Please note: it is only possible to order a whole disc of programs, and not individual ones. This saves time and a lot of messing around with file copiers.

Disc 1 - Mag Indexes

A - AMSMAG87.BIN	(45K)	MAGS871.TXT	(24K)	MAGS872.TXT	(24K)
MAGS873.TXT	(23K)	ODDMAGS.BIN	(31K)	READ-ME.DOC	(7K)
B - AMSMAG86.BIN	(45K)	MAGS861.TXT	(19K)	MAGS862.TXT	(19K)
MAGS863.TXT	(19K)	MAGS864.TXT	(19K)	ODDMAGS1.TXT	(24K)
ODDMAGS2.TXT	(23K)				

Disc 2 - 6128 Manual Programs

A - 25-SQUAR.BAS	(4K)	BIOCHART.BAS	(3K)	CRYPTONE.BAS	(4K)
F4SQUARE.BAS	(2K)	FAMILY.BAS	(2K)	FLAG-1.BAS	(3K)
FLAG-2.BAS	(2K)	J-CHARS.BAS	(13K)	KEYS.BAS	(4K)
LIFE-10.BAS	(5K)	MEMGRAPH.BAS	(9K)	NEWMOWER.BAS	(6K)
OTHELLOO.BAS	(12K)	PAPERMAN.BAS	(8K)	PENNY10.BAS	(3K)
PJBOMER.BAS	(5K)	PJBOMSCR.	(1K)	POLAR.BAS	(3K)
POLARMD2.BAS	(3K)	RAFFLES.BAS	(9K)	SCOSAVER.BAS	(6K)
SPELLING.BAS	(7K)	SPORTMAN.BAS	(7K)	SURFACES.BAS	(2K)
TODAY.BAS	(2K)	TYPTUTOR.BAS	(3K)	USEOFMIN.BAS	(2K)
WUMPUSEJ.BAS	(4K)				

Disc 2 - BASIC Games

B - BREAK.BAS	(8K)	BREAK4.DAT	(6K)	BREAK9.DAT	(6K)
BREAK1.DAT	(6K)	BREAK5.DAT	(6K)	BRKDATA.BAS	(5K)
BREAK10.DAT	(6K)	BREAK6.DAT	(6K)	README.BAS	(4K)
BREAK2.DAT	(6K)	BREAK7.DAT	(6K)		
BREAK3.DAT	(6K)	BREAK8.DAT	(6K)		

Disc 3 - BASIC Utility Programs

A - AMSDIR0.BAS	(3K)	ICON2.BAS	(1K)	INPUT1.BAS	(6K)
AMSDIR0.DOC	(3K)	ICON2.DOC	(6K)		

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