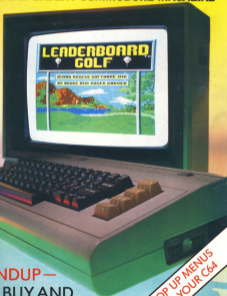


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Advertisement Copy

Control:

Laura Champion

Group Editor:

Dave Matthews

Group Managing

Editor:

Barbara Palmer

Managing Director:

Peter Williams

Origination:

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Spaced Out

AN UNHOLY ALLIANCE BETWEEN Hewlett and Atari, Inc. has resulted in the release of *Brill's Alpha* billed as a shoot-'em-up with an intellectual twist.

John Gilly, who has to contend with thousands of *Laker Lines*, *Zetecore* Janitors, *Buildin' Masters* and *Cigger Cruisers*.

The intellectual bit occurs when you progress to fighting on two planets at the same time. It's just been released and costs £8.95 on cassette and £12.95 on disk.

Bill in Space. Grinnin has released *Project Nova* for the C-16/Plus/4. It's a space combat simulation in which you have the opportunity to be a space pilot.

There are 12 stages through which to progress, starting at novices and building up to the much coveted legendary status.

Star Trek has now been a cult TV series for 20 years and the official computer version will be launched in late September by Beyond. French Joe of Beyond said: "We are very proud to be playing such an important part in this major happening, and we have no doubt that the Star Trek project will be the most significant licensing deal signed this year."

DATA STATEMENTS

Touch line

Hewlett: Hewlett House, 188 Wilton Trading Estate, Wilton, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RS. 0225 812000.

Grinnin: Alpha House, 107 Canon Street, Sheffield S1 4ES. 0742 754415.

Beyond: Wellington House, Upper St Martins Lane, London WC2H 9BS. 01 275 3462.



Show Calendar

The PCW Show 1986 opens its doors to the public on 3 September and according to advance publicity it will be the biggest and best yet.

Among the companies exhibiting will be US Guld, Finland, Denmark, Blue Ribbon Software, Chemsol, Elex and Mitronsoft. New products include titles such as Express Reader, Countlet, Breakthru, Infiltrator and Trivial Pursuit.

The show will have a similar format to last year. The business and professional section can be found in Olympia II while the computing and leisure style stands are situated in the National Hall.

As a special attraction in the main hall, there will be *Charabuster* - a giant video display of the year's best-selling games.

Tickets are available in advance for £2. See Touchline for the address.

The show closes on 7 September.

Still on the subject of shows, here are your social engagements for January and February 1987. If not then you may like to keep 21-26 January free for the Third High Technology and Equipment in Education Exhibition and 17-20 February for the Which? Computer Show.

The THTE is organized by IMAF Exhibitions and divides into five main themes: Training, and employment, policy and planning, management and technology, teaching and technology and technology and special needs.

The Which? Computer Show, although attendees have become more

computer literate of late, still maintains a reputation as one of the best places for beginners to start. The show has changed from its usual January dates in order to distance itself slightly from the Christmas and New Year hysteria which characteristically hits the industry and eventshouse January events.

Touchline

PCW Show: Montbuild Ltd, 51 Leadenhall Square, London W1M 5AE. 01 480 1551.

THTE Exhibition: IMAF International Exhibitions Ltd, Abbot's Court, 34 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

The Which? Computer Show: Calsons Exhibitions, Chisworth House, 56 London Road, Twickenham TW1 2JZ. 01 893 5051.

Print Outs

For those of you who will never manage to find the money to buy a laser printer, Microlease has brought new hope into your lives. For a paltry £79 per week you can hire a Canon LBP-8 Laser Beam Printer.

The Canon Laser printer provides quiet, crystal clear printing at a very fast speed and is compatible with most computer systems via the RS-232 interface.

The Canon Laser printer provides quiet, crystal clear printing at a very fast speed and is compatible with most computer systems via the RS-232 interface.

If you're shopping around to buy a printer then Datamarc Computer Supplies has some new additions to its range. There are three Silver Reed Disk Wheel printers now available; the DWP 208 at £267, the EXP 600 for £348 and at the top-end of the range is the EXP 600 at £799.

There are also new dot matrix printers from Panasonic; the KX-P1050 at £95. The KX-P1050 at £495 and the KX-P1580 at £695.

Hand Lines

Sanomat is set to expand its range of Arcade and arcade turbo joysticks with three new models and a revised and improved version of the Competition Pro - now to be called the Bureau Micro Pro.



Gold Standards

The list of UK Gold Awards releases is incredibly long, here's the list for the OMA there is Master of the Universe, Intimidator, Hot Wheels, Wrestling, Movie Master, Super Cycle, World Game, Serious, Legend Rider, Breakthru and Gazelles. The O-16 is only entered for with Winter Games and Summer Games.

According to Sanomat, there is a need for much better quality joystick due to the increase in 'fast action' games. Sanomat told four Commodore "We have taken the opportunity to advance designs to achieve the absolute best in terms of accuracy, responsiveness, sensitivity and reliability".

The Elite (£79.95) is now available in the new version of the Competition Pro (Micro Pro at £76.95). The Arcade and Elite Plus (both at £17.95) will be in the shops soon.

The 1071 disk drive has come in for a lot of criticism because of its diabolical slowness. Further software has come to the aid of frustrated Commodore owners with the Enhancer 200 disk drive. Claims for the Enhancer include: Commodore compatibility, super high speed, one year warranty, optional durability, double density, 35 track. The Enhancer 200 costs 110* including VAT and p&p.

Touchline

Microlease: Forbes House, Whitefriars Lane, Tudor Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 3SS. 01 427 9822.

Datamarc: 52 Derry Street, Lock Heath, Birmingham B71 5AL. 0151 383360.

Bureau: Pinfold Lane, Wellington, North Humberstone F011 5AB. 032591198.

Finalizer R.L. Ltd. 206 Great North Road, Essex Sectors, St Neots, Cambs PE19 3EF. 0460 210 381.

Touchline

UK Golds Units 2/3 Halford Way, Halford, Birmingham B4 7AS. 071 591 1380.



That Sporting Life

Amco has recently released another C-16/Plus/4 game, signifying continuing support for these two computers. The new game is Winter Events and can be played by up to four players. There are six different events: biathlon, ski jump, bob sled, speed skating, slalom, downhill.

Winter Events cost £7.95.

Remember Graham Good's Test Cricket from Amlogic? If you don't then it's about to hit the streets again. If you do then you may be interested in an updated version.

Amlogic's Henry Smithson said: "We aim to make Graham Good's Test Cricket into another handy perennial of the software market by means of conversions and continuous improvement."

Alterations to the 64 version include changing the built in squads of England and Australian players and their averages to reflect the 1985 test series.

The cassette version costs £5.95 and the disk version is £71.95.

Melbourne House has now released a follow up to the immensely successful Way of the Exploding Fist. The new game, entitled *It: The Legend Continues* is another martial arts game in which you use your skills to conquer the powers of darkness in the land. Your aim is to reach the volcano/fortress of the evil warlord and dispose of him. According to Melbourne House "It's a new breed of computer game is born". It's on cassette and costs £9.95.

Touchline

Amco: 15 West Hill, Dartford, Kent DA1 2LJ. 0332 82591.

Amlogic: 26 Suttons Industrial Park, London Road, Reading, Berks RG1 6AZ. 071 624666.

Melbourne House: 60 High Street, Hampton Wick, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey KT1 4DB. 01 943 1911.

Generally Speaking

If you're a bit short of cash and feel that you need a new computer then maybe Aristocrat is about to come to your aid. The Great Aristocrat Spot the Screen Shot Challenge has recently been launched.

Every Aristocrat game which you play will contain a mystery screen shot and in order to win a fantastic prize you must name the game featured in the shot.

If you get your answer right then you could win a free game, a badge or money-off tokens, from three year entry will go into a prize draw it's eligible even if you guessed the wrong game! And the grand prize is a computer.

You can choose from either a CUG, a Spectrum 128, and Amstrad 6128 or an Atari 1080.

Anyone out there with a pirate copy of Word Star, however! The MicroPro Word Star amnesty has now come to an end and after 750 disks had been returned for legitimisation.

Brian Oliver, Micropro's MD said: "Just for the record, I would like to repeat what we said at the time of the announcement of the amnesty, that we will not prosecute any of these people, neither will we disclose their names to anyone." He added: "The amnesty is now over, and we will take a severe view of software pirates that come to our notice, since we feel that we have been more than so far."

Still on the subject of crime, there's a new home burglar alarm system which may save you losing your precious Commodore computer.

Arsolam, from Racomble, is a new home and commercial security system which can be installed by the user with the aid of just a screwdriver.

The Arsolam controller forms the heart of the system, it has a powerful internal siren (battery powered) and a key-switch with over 3000 different keys.

The controller can be used alone to warn if your computer is unplugged or the mains lead cut. The controller costs £48 and a whole system can be bought for less than £200.

Citizen Europe, makers of printers, have been going round doing their bit for education in this country. The company recently donated 20 printers to the local education authority for use in schools in the Uxbridge area. Miss Kinawa, MD of the company, the mayor of Hillingdon recently attended a ceremony to hand over the printers, accompanied by members of Greenway Secondary School.

Touchline

Aristocrat 14 Long Acre, Crown Garden, London WC1E 9H 07 886 9171.
Micropro 104 Park House, 28-31 High Street, Wimbledon Village, London SW20 9BT.

Racomble 1 Lakeside Crescent, Ilkesham, Devon EX14 9P1 0271 62861.



Next Month

NEXT ISSUE, YOUR COMMODORE will have a bright new look. A look that will be more in tune with the country's most discerning computer owners. Yes, we mean you!

Over the past month or so, completed readers survey forms have been flooding into our office. We're very thankful to find that, by and large, you think we've got it about right. Of course there'll be a few minor adjustments here and there, but you'll still find all your favourite features.

You'll also find something else too! Because next issue, to mark our sophisticated new look, we'll be giving away a FREE concrete packed with updates to our entry cards, to run on a C64 for C128 in C64 mode!

Finally, there'll be an exclusive game written by Tony Crowther, one of the UK's top games writers. Called 84-04, the game puts you in control of a robot droid which you have to try to guide out of an enemy complex. Needless to say, there are lots of enemy droids trying to stop you from doing just that! As you'd expect from a Crowther game, the action is fast and furious and the sound track superb!

The second program is a Basic Extension. Anyone who's programmed on the C64 will have craved the sophisticated toolkit commands as found on some real minis. You know what we mean: **RENUMBER**, to help tidy up programs; **AUTO**, to release you of the tedium of typing line numbers yourself; and **TRAIL**, to help you find out why your latest masterpiece just crashed. The Your Commodore Basic Extension will have these and more - in fact no less than 27 new commands to make program design and development so much easier.

Finally, those of you with disk drives should not be without the Your Commodore Disk Utility. It will give you a wide range of powerful commands to aid your disk usage. You will be able to change headers and IDs on all disks, change the LQAD address of any programs, even protect your disk from prying eyes, plus lots more.

So don't miss the November 1986 issue of Your Commodore. Cancel that holiday, forget the new car - jicket your newspaper instead!



SENSE OF ADVENTURE

**Rumecaster casts a critical
eye over the latest releases
on the adventure scene.**

FOR SOME TIME THERE WAS A definite gap in the flow of new adventure games for the C64. This was on the part of those who carried out spare-time entertainment, seems to have been rectified to such an extent that there now appears to be almost a glut of releases to attract our attention.

There have been several re-releases of programs, originally for other computers and a fair number of brand new titles from well known software houses. Massacre has done it again with the 64 version of an OMI Spectrum game called *Kevally* - at £1.99 this has got to be worth buying. *Beowulf* of the Kings from CRL was also a Spectrum winner and has at last appeared for the 64.

Downfall's *Revenge* - another Spectrum char-burner - a game of adventure/strategy just reissued from Beyond, looks all set to keep many a 64 user tied to the keyboard for weeks of fantastic, devilish-old. Most of the better games today appear as conversions for several computers, almost at the same time and it is good to see that several software houses are prepared to pressure with conversions of yesterday's winners.

New releases include *Reverent* from Activision, *Pilgrim* and the Very Big Cave Adventure from CRL, *Mystery Voyage* from Colibri - newcomers to the adventure scene - the fabulous *Ultima IV* from USAGold, and of course Level Nine's latest, *The Price of Magic*.

The Price is Right

Could this be Level Nine's best yet? *The Price of Magic* is a sequel to *Red Moon*, their second exciting game of 1985. The action nearly all takes place within the confines of *The House of the Red Moon*

and the crux of the game is your search to find and defeat the evil sorcerer Magik.

There are no pseudo-treasures to find and no score to eaves, although SCORE is recognised and will alert a report on your present sanity and apparent age! The aim of the game is to learn (and find) a one (or) more 18 odd spells that will finally enable you to neutralise the powers of the wicked Magik.

Level Nine's last game was *The House of Nazdar* and this set a new standard for adventures in this country. A vocabulary of over 3000 words, a parser that makes sense of complex sentences and a supporting system that permits the typing in of commands even while pictures are being drawn on the screen (multi-tasking).



The Price of Magic has all this and more. It also incorporates RAM SAVE and RAM HISTORY which enables the player to quickly 'save' and subsequently 'restore' the game position to any section of the computer's memory. A

very useful facility if you anticipate a change in scene or decision ahead! The RAM SAVE facility is lost when you switch off the computer and is not recovered if you restores a tape SAVE.

Another Level Nine first was the light of day in this program - the command COPS. This is not so distant as RAM SAVE as it enables you to return to your last previous location, very useful if there are a number of chests to open and some of them explode and reduce your stamina (hit points), COPS and it never happened!

Your stamina is fairly important, as there are several unpleasant treatments that will not let you rest without a fight. A weapon and some herbs of various are useful first before you get too involved! Magik may also help and hear in mind that simple killing in such an environment might release your opponent's ghosts, who may not be all that friendly to you in the future!

Some creatures may be controlled by you. Needless to say, Magik will be a definite plus for this, learning to use each of the 18 spells requires knowledge of both the type name of the spell - ZAP, FLY, HYF etc; and the object that will enable you to 'focus' your powers to perform that particular Magik. Clues found along the way will supply the type name and trying to CAST AN will tell you what else is needed to make that spell work.

This is also the first adventure game to be protected against piracy by using the logical system. This requires a plastic (prismatic) lens arrangement supplied with the game, that converts what appears on the screen as a graphic picture into a readable bar code. This code is entered and if you have a correct, then the program continues, if not then you have to try again until you get it right.

At least in *The Price of Magic*, you get a second, third, fourth (and any chance to get the level code right. Some programs using Logical, MDW the program if you do not get the code right! Upper case characters seem to be fairly easy to identify but I found that the lower case characters very difficult to read. Just take care, read the instructions, get the lens the right way up and all should be well.

This adventure is probably the best yet from Level Nine, the graphics are drawn quickly and the text is up to the usual high standard. The idea of finding spells rather than a series of treasures is clever and keeps the mind sharp throughout. Although most of the clues and necessary items to make the spells work are perfectly logical, Level Nine's own brand of humour is never far away.

Even if you feel you are coping reasonably well, never forget that Level Nine will provide comprehensive clue sheets on request of a stamped addressed envelope and the fans require form that comes with every game.

These chess sheets are by far and away the best I have ever seen. They consist of hundreds of numbered intersections of which two sections are lists of objects and places, knock up an object or place and you will be directed to additional numbered references that will provide a hint together with additional references.

All the answers are jumbled up, so that knocking up one clue will not clue you into answers you do not wish to see. Even if you want to cheat, finally, the clues will only point you in the right direction and HCOL give you a definitive answer to the entire game. Brilliant!

There are others a number of red herrings within these clues. You may spot a Three Headed Minotaur mentioned over to the Tanager you are looking up; but there is no guarantee that such a creature is actually part of the game! I wish other software houses could learn just how irrevocable such a system of self help chess sheets can be.

The only criticism I feel is seeing a new adventure from last time is that this means we have to wait at least three or four months before we see the next one!

Level At Sea

Callisto is a relatively new software house, based in Males and not across the Irish Sea as the name would lead you to expect. Having produced an interesting and instructive music disk for the C64 that includes a guitar tutor, 3D chip music, drum machine and a music creator, it is not surprising that the first adventure program from this company features sound rather than graphics.

Mystery Voyage is available on both tape and disk and is a three part adventure requiring codes learnt in one part to continue to the next. The style in which you are travelling forwards is tough sea leaving you alone on a rocky raft amidst a number of small islands. Can you survive long enough to escape death?

First you must find a series of treasures to appease a sea monster who blocks your path to freedom. This is no easy task, as in addition to your troubles, you have no food or drink, without which you will surely perish.

The location descriptions are detailed and set the scene well, with the occasional sound effects adding to the mind's impression of the places visited. The puzzles are in the fairly classic mould, with certain locations not accessible until the right objects/actions have been located/performed.

There are a number of clues that will put you on the right path and the puzzles, while not particularly difficult, must be solved in the right sequence - or you will die of hunger or thirst. Mapping is important and read the descriptions carefully to distinguish the difference between certain entry locations!

The command parser is of a simple nature, generally leading to a straight verb/noun input. There is very little interaction with the creatures you meet although talking to some of them is important. Examining objects is vital to the game but only a few give much in the way of additional information.

This may be a good game for novice adventurers, as the lessons learnt here will stand them in good stead when they come to tackle a more complex plot in the future. There are plenty of locations to visit and map right from the start and frequent use of the SAVE facility is to be recommended - preferably just after you have been fed and watered!

The sound effects may be switched off, which is probably a good thing. After the first few hearings they become a nuisance, partly because they have been programmed in direct mode and you have to wait for them to finish before you can type in any new commands. Future programs from Callisto will probably have these effects in background mode using the interrupt, allowing a multi-tasking similar to that used by Level Nine's graphics.

It is possible a new software house producing adventure games and although this one will not reach the top of the charts, the game is sound if not topically will be the best of many.

New Classic

As we are often telling you, the classic adventure is that of the colonial caves.



how may back them, written by Miles Frazer and Woods. There have been a number of reimaginings of this game for the C64, some better than others. We now have yet another version, this time from the fertile mind of St Bricks and distributed by CBL.

The Very Big Cave Adventure is distinctly different.

Your guide and mentor around the caves is more other than Wise Wizard, killed not as usual by boater, blue goblin and black stockings, leading by the mud around the, it is also wearing hot wheels! Anyone who has played one of the serious versions just has to get this one.

It is written using the Quill, Illustrator and The Patch and from Quill and shows just what sort of professional products these adventure writing utilities can create. The graphics are good, appear quickly and the descriptions full and highly amusing. The whole adventure is completely recognizable as a Colonial Caves derivation but the entire game is full of minor alterations that make it a joy to play.

For those that have enjoyed these caves before, there will be more to suggest! First and last items have been those before you, and have altered many of the puzzles - notice little devils. There are some of the original treasures remaining but you may also find such gems as the rot! Correspondence table to pick up as well.

For those that are new to the caves just lean back and enjoy a rare treasure here with an amusing guide. The game is well put together and has all the latest additions that come with Callisto's Patch, most useful of those is the RAM SAVE. This is very useful and will save using up too much of your lamp's fuel while you are trying to sort out how to catch that damned fish!

The program has a lot to offer and because of its size, the game is played in two parts, but you must SAVE your position either to tape or disk before leaving the first part. This will ensure that you have all the treasure and any vital objects you need to carry through to the second part. The second part has strong overtones of Alice in Wonderland, complete with tarty, chattering rabbit.

Throughout the adventure beware of words that have a double meaning, where a word may be understood in more than one way input the best likely interpretation. The vocabulary understood in each hall is not extensive neither does the program understand complex input commands. For all that, there is a feeling of depth to the game with plenty of items to examine and a good range of responses.

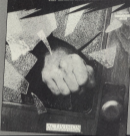
One of the 'magic words' from the original cave adventures was PULCH, transporting you from one location to another. Type this in here and you will get a 'plug' for St Bricks next game, I can hardly wait!

Find The Lady

One type of new standard adventure is based on the detective story. There have

BORROWED TIME

Danger in the First Degree...
An Illustrated Text Adventure



been several published, ranging from Infocom's *Deathwatch* through Melbourne House's *Wendell and the Way* including Activision's *Mistfall* edition. The latter just barely creeps in, although in the strictest sense it is not quite a detective game as the solution is quite tightly defined - providing you have solved the puzzles in the right order.

Activision has now released a top of the range detective game - *Borrowed Time*. This is a disk based program for the C64/128 and it fits great in your kind of thing - buy it. You play the part of private eye Sam Harlow and initially you do not know what problem you have to solve. You start in your office, just two rooms, one for you and one for your girl Friday, his Spinster.

There are plenty of hints suggesting that someone is looking for you and a very loud phone call where a robot gasps out: "Sam, they want you dead...". You must not only solve the case but find out what is the root of all these problems and solve the mystery.

Borrowed Time is unusual in offering the facility of either using the keyboard in the usual way or a joystick. The screen is divided into four parts. One, just over a quarter, displays a good graphic picture at the present scene. Beneath this is the text window, used for your input commands and the computer's responses.

On the right of the screen is a list of verbs/nouns accessed by a pointer with the joystick and above this, pictorial icons of objects held, together with a

compass rose for joystick directions.

I found the use of a joystick completely superfluous, as many of the words I wished to enter were not on the limited list displayed. It was also easier to enter the single letter 'T' to travel east, than to position the pointer over the correct part of the compass. Perhaps I'm old fashioned and you will think otherwise.

The graphics are very good, clear and neatly undertaken. Good use of sprites give many of the scenes the quality of moving pictures - washing blows on the line, heads move in the crowd and faces gleam under gasps. They may be criticised, but they show something that will trigger an important action, so are best left well!

The text often continues the text window and RETURN has to be pressed to display the end of the message. For this reason alone, I would rather have access to the entire message rather than the noise of limited joystick commands refresh takes up the additional space.

Starting in his office, Sam Harlow can look at his files about his last few cases and generally explore his two rooms - this is out at the moment. On leaving the office, he is attacked by two gunmen and stands a very good chance of being shot dead!

Fortunately the game starts again very quickly and you can try again, there is also a QUIT/SAVE option that will enable you to skip over the first few moves that you feel must be taken before he lady arrives. His actions are

severely limited within the first five locations and perhaps I am just not cut out to be a detective but it took me the best part of two hours before I could break the pattern of being killed within only a few moves from the start!

In case you have the same experience, the answer to this problem is MISC USE EPS or location number five. This will give you time to do what I was trying to do (steal the best part of those two hours) believe me, there are plenty of further opportunities of getting killed but at least you can have the chance to wander around the city and learn something before it happens!

The input command parser is quite intelligent but for the most part a straight verb/noun input will be quite sufficient, with the program cleverly interpreting what you have in mind and acting very much as your recipient. Best descriptions and responses are detailed and explain a great deal as you proceed, keeping the player going all the time.

There is the option for nine MISC GAME positions (accessible via function key 1), use them. Mapping is also important, as there is always the possibility of sudden death around the corner and you will not have time to backtrack all that often to check your position. Keep a notebook handy to make notes of car/boots numbers etc. for the same reason.

Many of the people mentioned in the case files in your office will turn up during your investigation - again, a few names will help refresh your memory. I'm not sure whether it will be important, but do remember that this is an American program, so write your language! What we would all think, they all shades, a chequer has check and so on. Most important objects are shown in text on the screen so you can check the spelling.

A fascinating type of adventure with both good graphics and good text and most important of all a riveting story line. For all that I prefer my mystery novel to Sam's finely crafted gas, this is some program.

Indus Plus

As you will have seen in our special feature in the June issue, *Ultima IV* is now available, certainly as an American import at £49 but also available at its British home from U.S. Gold at a considerably less. If you like wielding a sword in fantastic lands with a quest to keep you going for weeks - look it out, it worth getting a disk drive specially to play it!

Finally, *Ultima IV* has been out for some time now and it will worth searching for. I've never seen it as often for as little as £1.95 (hardcopy sticks). If you have had trouble solving this one, you might try going my friend. That's the mighty trader of marks and cards, Alan 200 (442 80 2593). If he can remember that for back - give *Ultima IV* - he may be able to give you a useful tip or two!

POP UP MENUS

Lionel Jack provides
a handy menu routine
for C64 owners.

You've all seen at some time how pop-up menus can really give programs a look of professionalism. Well now you can achieve the same effect in your own programs. This utility allows the user to call a number of pop-up menus of his/her own design to enhance their own screen display which is returned to its original state when the menus are erased.

Machine Code

Although the work horse of the program has been written in Machine Code (for obvious speed) it has been designed to be accessible from Basic.

Before you can use the program you must type in the machine code loader program. This program is not too long and has an automatic save facility at the end (tape or disk) so that you are just left with the source code for quick, easy loading from Basic.

Demonstration

Once the Machine Code is saved you can type in the small demonstration program to see just what the program is capable of. This routine has been written on a very simple level just to give you an idea of how everything works. The number, size, colour and position of your own menus is completely under your own control. Refer to Figure 1 for a complete breakdown of the demonstration program.

You will find a short delay when you run the demo. This is just the computer reading the text into memory; this means that the menus will appear almost immediately when called later in the program.

Designing your own menus

When designing your own menus there are just five parameters that you must pass to the M/C to get the size, colour etc. that you require. If you examine the demonstration program these parameters are:

- L:** The number of lines that you want in your menu. Always add two to the total that you require to allow for a border across the top and bottom.
- M:** This is the width of the menu. Again add two to your total to allow for a border down the sides.
- C:** This is the colour of the shadow of the menu. The program will automatically

make the foreground of the menu the next higher colour in the Commodore colour table. If you therefore choose 0 (black) as the shadow then the foreground will be 1 (white).

- B:** This indicates which menu you wish to display. (I discuss text later but for now all that you need to know is that the menu number, conveyed to the order in which the text appears in the DATA statements, lines 100-270 in the demo). In other words if B=0 then you will get the third block of text in the menu.

- SA:** This is the start position of the top left hand corner of the menu; it should be equal to a screen memory location. For your information location 1024 is at the top left hand corner of the screen, you should be able to work out the rest from there.

Entering Text

The only other thing you need to know is how to set up your text. You may have as much text as you like in each of your menus, as long as it will all fit on the screen, but care needs to be taken that it appears exactly how you want it to.

Figure 1

LINE	DESCRIPTION
5	LOAD M/C (change device to 1 for tape).
10	N = Number of menus.
20	POKE \$70,0 to protect original screen.
30 - 50	Set up parameters for each menu.
60	POKE \$70,1 to restore original screen.
100 - 140	Pass parameters and call M/C to print menus.
200	Convert menu address to POKE numbers.
300 - 370	Read text for menus and store in memory.

PROGRAM: DEMONSTRATION

```

1 REM POP-UP DEMO. CMB/84...L.JACK.
1986
2 C=C+1:IFC=1THENLOAD"EMPOP",1,1
10 M=3:GOSUB500
20 POKE679,0:SYS49152:REM STORE CURSR
MT SCREEN
30 L=4:M=10:C=0:B=1:SA=1368:GOSUB100
40 L=10:W=3:C=7:R=3:SA=1368:GOSUB100
50 L=4:M=18:C=11:B=3:SA=1368:GOSUB100
60 POKE679,1:SYS49152:REM RECOVER ORI
GINEL SCREEN
70 END
100 REM POKE IN PARAMETERS & CALL M/C
110 POKE679,L:POKE680,W:POKE681,C:POK
E682,B:POKE683,M:POKE684,R:POKE685,S
120 POKE252,A:IOI:POKE251,A:IOI:POKE250
,A:IOI:POKE254,A:IOI:212
130 SA=BOX(0):GOSUB200:SYS49251:M=W-2
140 POKE253,A:IOI:POKE254,A:IOI:POKE682
-41-M:SYS49484
150 GETY9:IFY9<0" C"THENX150
160 RETURN
300 A:IOI=INT(SA/256):A:IOI=SA-A:IOI*256
-RETURN
500 AD=45491:POKE=170W
510 BOX(K)+AD
520 READR:FORJ=1TOLEN(A):P=ASC(ORIG
(A),J,1)
530 IFF=42THENX500
534 IFF=42THENM=P-64
540 POKEAD,P:AD=AD+1:NEFTJ
550 NEXTJ:RETURN
560 DATA=HERE" D & POP-UP TESTER PRG2
" C * "
565 DATA=PRESS C * "
570 DATA"O.K. NOW RESTORESCREEN...PRE
SS C * "

```

When writing your test as DATA statements (see demo) you might need to place extra spaces between words or even have words connected (see line 533 in demo). This is only to make sure that the test is correctly spaced in the menu. Plan your menus carefully before you enter the DATA statements and you should have no problems.

You may have noticed that the test data in the demo has an asterisk (*) at the end of each line. This merely an indication to the computer that this is the end of the test for a particular menu. As my demo is pretty short my test for each menu has not gone over one line, but as I suggested earlier your test may be as long as you like and may therefore require more than one line to get it all in.

Make sure that you place an asterisk at the end of every menu.

Of course if you wish to use the asterisk within your test you will have to change the end of menu signal to another character. A good character to use is "!" if you use this change the 02 character code for "*" in line 580 of the demo to 04 (character code for "!").

On Your Own

Remember to always protect your current screen (line 30) before printing a menu and recover it (line 68) when you want to clear the menu.

Do not be intimidated by this explanation, it really is quite simple to produce your own professional looking

PROGRAM: M/C GENERATOR

```

1000 PRINT "(CLR) (DOWN) (DOWN) MACHINE
CODE GENERATOR = WORKING..."
2000 FORL=1TO18:CX=C+0:POKE0-5TO15:READA:
CX=C+4:POKE49152+L*16+D,A:NEFTB
2010 READA:IFAC=0THENPRINT"ERROR IN L
INE":2040+L*101:STOP
2020 NEFTL
2040 DATA172,167,2,149,204,133,234,169
,0,133,261,133,293,169,4,133,2346
2050 DATA252,192,0,240,42,10,92,193,23
0,261,266,2,230,252,230,253,2718
2060 DATA268,2,236,264,165,261,261,231
,208,231,185,252,201,7,208,225,2639
2070 DATA192,6,268,7,173,134,2,141,171
,2,98,173,171,2,141,134,1747
2080 DATA2,160,0,193,0,216,193,293,216
,193,294,217,193,219,218,260,2683
2090 DATA209,160,162,0,161,251,129,
253,76,24,192,163,0,161,253,2360
2100 DATA129,251,96,160,0,149,171,2,17
3,167,2,72,165,251,72,165,2017
2110 DATA252,72,179,160,2,162,0,169,16
0,129,251,173,169,2,129,253,2360
2120 DATA196,240,19,230,251,230,253,20
6,236,230,252,230,254,76,117,162,2148
2130 DATA209,167,2,240,19,165,251,24,1
09,170,2,144,4,230,252,230,2519
2140 DATA264,133,291,133,253,76,114,19
2,236,172,2,173,172,2,261,2,2666
2150 DATA240,48,238,149,2,104,133,252,
104,133,251,133,259,104,141,167,2467
2160 DATA2,160,252,24,105,212,133,254,
173,167,2,56,230,2,93,169,2617
2170 DATA251,72,165,252,72,165,251,24,
165,41,76,135,194,104,133,292,2318
2180 DATA104,133,251,104,141,167,2,179
,169,2,56,230,2,141,168,2,1447
2190 DATA162,251,24,165,62,144,2,230,2
52,133,251,96,172,166,2,162,2238
2200 DATA0,161,253,34,105,129,129,251,
136,240,19,230,251,208,2,293,2363
2210 DATA252,230,253,268,2,230,254,76,
293,192,208,167,2,240,21,165,2753
2220 DATA251,24,109,179,2,144,2,230,25
2,133,251,239,253,206,2,230,2491
2230 DATA254,76,152,191,94,0,0,0,64,63
,0,63,0,63,0,63,1248
3000 REM ** READY TO SAVE **
3010 PRINT "(DOWN) (DOWN) ANY KEY TO
SAVE"
3020 GETK1:IFK1=" "THENX3020
3030 POKE 43,0:POKE44,192:POKE45,57:PO
KE46,193
3070 SAVE "EMPOP",0
3080 REM CHANGE .B TO .1 FOR TAPE USE

```

pop-up menus and it's certainly worth the effort. You can see how short the demo is so try it first and later

so it when you write your own routines.

A little practice and you'll be pleased you tried.

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Commodore 128. Starting Basic
Book 1
Sean Gray
Glentop
£3.95

This lively book forms an ideal companion to the 128. The author has made a determined attempt to break away from the textbook style without getting too light in his approach.

Gray approaches his subject from the standpoint of a total beginner, playing around with the keyboard first of all and rapidly meeting system errors. After this introduction the book concentrates on the basic commands in a programming environment. This means that it introduces each set of commands within

very short games programs explaining their purpose and full syntax. Some chapters end exercises to give you a chance to see how much is sinking in.

All of the listings which incorporate graphic commands use a special form of notation, similar to the listings in this magazine, and the meanings are explained in one of the book's appendices.

When the graphics and sound commands are introduced the book takes time to explain the principles involved with easy to understand diagrams. All the time the author encourages you to stand on your own two feet and not just tell you how yourself to be spoon fed.

This becomes apparent in the closing chapters where Gray shows how to plan a program. Each section of the program is listed individually and discussed so that each project is fully described and justified.

For newcomers to computing via the C128, this book provides a useful introduction and at just under £4 it offers excellent value.

The Official Commodore 128 Personal Computer Book
Mittchell Waite, Robert Lafone,
Jerry Volpe
Sams (Macmillan)
\$12.95

This is a very general book on the C128, more of an expanded brochure than a manual. Much of its time is spent talking about the various modes and applications of the 128. Apparently aimed at the first time user this is not a book for first time buyers. The text does go into graphics, audio and music commands but much of its 200 pages are concerned with describing the computer, its facilities and general architecture.

In many places it is not an easy read.



adding more on verbal description rather than examples but this problem is eased slightly by the use of colourful diagrams where applicable.

If you're getting the impression that I disliked this book then you're wrong. It's just a little disoriental where its market would fit. For the uninitiated it is a bit heavy in places, for the technical buff it has something to offer but over all there is little to be gained by re-reading.

It is the sort of book which should be given away with the computer. It falls between the stools of being a book for beginners and one for experienced users. One useful section concentrates on the CP/M operating system and its related commands but another describes the types of application software available.

Most of the information can be gleaned from various magazine articles and at the price there are many better bargains appearing on the market with a greater content.

Oxford Pascal on the Commodore 64
Ian Sinclair
Casell Computing
£7.95

This is the official guide to the Pascal compiler marketing by Oxford Computer systems. (software) Ltd and deals with both the source and the extended disk versions.

Ian Sinclair is a prolific writer of books on all aspects of computing and this shows

in the clear, concise style. Throughout the book he takes every opportunity to try to tell the advantages of Pascal over Basic and a very convincing argument it makes.

Oxford Pascal is written specifically for the features of the 64 which means that extra commands are available for graphics or sound and for incorporating machine code routines within a program. Sinclair covers all of these areas along with the more usual commands in just enough detail to set the reader on the path to the structured programming which Pascal demands. All keywords are highlighted in bold capitals which makes knowing a delight.

Example programs are used to illustrate the correct syntax and structure and the author has kept these short to allow the beginner to see what is happening without having to type faithfully for an hour or so.

Where the tape and disk versions vary a suitable note is made but overall the majority of these commands are given a chapter to themselves.

This book is very simple to follow and written in a style which is very easily understood. A recommended read for anyone contemplating buying the program.



complex is the fact that after describing the system overview, there is very little room left in the book for programming examples. After reading the book you will get a feeling that you've only skated the surface with the machine rather than having gained an intimate knowledge.

This book should prove invaluable to anyone thinking of upgrading out on the new machine. It will also be a companion in the first few months of use but eventually it will settle its shelves as the system becomes more familiar.

Garbits, icons, the Blitter, insurance and all the other mysteries of the machine are clearly explained in layman's terms. The actual harnessing of the Amiga's power is not dealt with in great detail.

I found the description of the internal chips of the Amiga a little out of place in its position at the beginning of the book. A more general introduction would have given a less daunting approach to the non-technically minded reader. Although I admit that the text makes things crystal clear, I must also admit that it is difficult to cloud a shallow point.

A recommended read for those contemplating a spending spree but an Amiga owner would look for something more meaty.

The Anatomy of the 1571 Disk Drive

Rainer Ellinger
First Publishing
£12.95
0-940815-001

FIRST PUBLISHING REALLY HAS GOT its act together when it comes to publishing detailed documentation on Commodore products. In this offering over half of the book is given over to a complete disassembly of the 1571/771 8044 and the rest of the book is a detailed instruction manual.

The first section of the book explains about setting up the drive and

formatting disks. This is followed by explanations of the simpler commands in Basic 7.0.

Each command description is preceded by a clearly laid out table in bold characters. Here the command is shown in line format, the current 7.0 style, the alternative line, the old style command used before Basic 5.0 came along, and the command as it used from the Monitor. Beneath this table is an explanation of the use of the command and any points which are essential to the user. Finally, this section carries the essential warning about the save and replace command which does not appear to have been improved since the old PET days. **NEVER** use it!

Advanced disk commands are dealt with in a similar to concise way. This points out the peculiar implementation of the **BACKUP** command which has no earthly use for **TRASH** or **CTRS** users.

Sequential and relative files are covered with varying degrees of success. The section on sequential filing is excellent but relative files are dealt with in a sketchy manner. This is no real fault with the book, it's just that the concept of relative file creation is too complex to be dealt with in the short space available within the book. Perhaps we can look forward to a definitive work on the subject in the near future.

The rest of the book is of interest to advanced programmer's only. The block access commands are investigated in sufficient depth, allowing the adventurous programmer to try them out. CP/M4 formats are described along with the range of formats which the T87 will recognise.

The GCR coding used by the disk system to store information is fully detailed, including how the sync marks are used to tell the disk drive where it is to start reading from.

For the price of this book you get a wealth of knowledge which is a must to the curious programmer and a sound investment for a novice who wishes to reach the heights of professionalism. Much of the 8044 disassembly is of no real use to the majority of programmers but holds a strange fascination for built such as myself.

I hate books which purport to being the "only book you'll ever need" and this book has no such claim. In this case I feel moved to make the claim for them for the majority of users this is THE definitive work.

Children at Risk
David Porter
Kingway Publications
£4.95
0-86865-374-9

DAVID PORTER HAS BEEN INVOLVED with computers for many years but his main concern at the moment is the welfare of children in today's high tech world.



The Amiga Handbook
David Lawrence and Mark England
Sunshine Books
£7.95

The whole publishing world seems to be full of general books about computers or computer systems. This book is a bit of an exception partly because most people are cautious about the Amiga's new and innovative range of capabilities. So

Children at Risk looks at all the pressures to which a child is subjected and the areas of Porter's concern seem principally to be media related. Apart from the final chapters on child abuse and drug addiction, the book concerns itself with videos and films, role-playing games, comics and computers.

From the outset Porter makes the reader aware of his Christian beliefs which will alienate potential readers who are agnostic or atheist. Does Porter think that Christians care more about their children than non-Christians? I hope not, but who limit the audience by indirectly involving the Muslims, Sikhs, Jews and various other concerned groups by giving the book such a heavily religious slant?

Part of the answer to this criticism is that the book is published by a staunchly Christian publishing house. Personally, I feel this is a pity because such views undoubtedly deserve a wider airing.

Very little attention has been drawn to the fact which computer games may be having on today's child and the questions which need to be posed if how divorced from reality are games?

The education of future generations is not Porter's concern, so doubt he played war games as cowboy and Indians in his own childhood and will grow up to be a well adjusted adult. He sees part of the threat in Adventure games which drive into the depths of terrorism and Black Magic. More importantly, in my opinion, he names the main evils as piracy and hacking.

Piracy is the bane of the computer industry and yet no effective legislation exists to prevent schoolchildren up and down the country from breaking the law each day. Porter implies that this puts the child on the wrong track and who knows where this may lead?

Many cases of children being aroused and convicted of breaking into personal files and private systems via modem-linked hacking have been given news coverage lately. Is this still a sin to breaking and entering?

Porter has got many strong arguments to put forward in each section of the book but I'm still left with the feeling that the author was boggedown talking in everything else, hiding behind the benefits. Is playing himself with Mary Whitehouse he set up his stall from the dedication page, in the middle of the book I was suffering from Bible-bashing fatigue but by the end I was more thoughtful.

Porter is a persuasive man who delivers an audience but, like medicine, it may leave a bad taste in your mouth.

Interestingly, the book is being promoted by Dave Carlos of Telelink's PR company. Is this a pancea for being involved with Domark's Friday the 13th promotion which used a strikingly gay man in its banned advertising campaign?

Getting The Most From Your Printer

**J W Penfold
Bernard Bahani
£2.95
0-85934-155-0**

DO INCAPACITATE ALL YOU WANT TO know about a printer in a mere 84 pages is a challenge, to say the least. When this involves all the popular makes of computer, the task appears impossible. Uncluttered by the problems, Penfold takes a brave stab at the subject and almost succeeds.

The author's main concession is to limit the text to the use of Epson dot matrix printers. It would have been better to mention this fact on the back of the book for those who have printers which are not Epson compatible.

Compared to most of the material available on this subject (almost exclusively manufacturers' manuals), this is a useful guide to some of the most desirable facilities which these printers provide.

Although the book seems lyrical about the various options, pitches, underlining, spacing, tab settings and the like, it only mentions the theory subject of user defined characters. Penfold's obvious aim is to stick to the normal printing functions of a matrix machine and this is borne out by the sections on wordprocessors.

The commands used are written in various Basics: Commodore, MSB, Spectrum, QL, Acorn, Amstrad, Menotech and the ill-fated Intertopic. If the book was thicker as if the range of machines were limited, there would have been room to include much more information. Still we must allow publishers plenty of room to make their profits.

What we are left with is a very useful guide for newcomers to Epson compatibles or for those users who rely on an interface to control straightforward printing and leave the clever stuff to the big boys.

An Introduction To Computer Communications

**R A Penfold
Bernard Bahani
£2.95
0-85934-151-8**

IF CDMAAS SOUND LIKE THE THINGS your grandfather wore in the cold weather, or if your son suggests the speed at which you eat is when watching yet another tedious Australian 'soap', then I strongly recommend this title to you.

All of the buzzwords are here: modems, vax bits, parity and duplex. As each word is encountered a full explanation is given which reveals the subject as a simple case shrouded in thick veils of jargon.

Penfold does not stop here, the book also delves into what you can (politely) do with your modem and stretches the subject into direct communication between computers and radio communications.

The section on direct connection (local network) is especially interesting to Commodore owners because the mystery of the non-standard RS-232 (the user port) is explained at length. Later in the book some simple program listings are given for direct communications between Vax 20 and C64.

For a mere £3 all this is remarkable value.

Commodore's Handbook of Simons' Basic

**Jan G Reh
Bady Communications Co. Inc.
(Prentice Hall Publishing Co.)
£11.95**

EVERY COMMODORE OWNER HAS heard of Simons' Basic (S.B.). If you have never become acquainted with S.B. then this is the book for you. Indeed, even if you are conversant with S.B., you may yet find some surprises here.

Jan Reh has compiled a very comprehensive survey of S.B. which clarifies the original manual very efficiently. It would be hard to get frustrated with this book as all commands are well defined in some 23 different sections, which cover almost everything you need to know. In addition there are plenty of sub-sections and a fine collection of illustrative programs. So if you really want to get to grips with S.B., this is the book for you.

David Simons has had the good sense to extend his programme and offers some streamlined ideas for you to try out. An interesting chapter on new methods of Data Handling is introduced involving 'local' and 'global' variables, while structured Programming gives four new commands PROC, END PROC, CALL, ESEC. These commands simplify programming tasks and could lead you into business programming in a modest way - A 'touch of Pascal' in quite the author's (perhaps so, but you will have to work on this one yourself to make full use of the commands).

Naturally everyone's concept of S.B. is as a graphics program. This is fully clarified here and the creation and use of sprites is happily dealt with - ideas aplenty here.

Sound and Music are adequately covered and the read functions for joystick, paddle and Lightpen discussed. The author does not seem too happy with these - quite rightly too!

I am happy to note that, in his foreword, David Simons gives full credit to Jan Reh for the compilation of the book. Good luck to both of them and to you when you see it as it is an enjoyable, well presented, well documented book which is good value for money. **J.M.**

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Ninja Master
 English Software
 C64 12/89

3 4 5 6



YET ANOTHER ORIENTAL martial arts game and a not very good one at that. Ninja Master sees you attempt to rise from the rank of absolute beginner by qualifying in four tests. Do this and you can try these again at a harder level etc, etc.

The first task sees you trying to head off arrows as they are fired at your body, using four keys - one for each limb. Secondly you have to karate chop a lump of wood. You have 20 seconds to hammer the keys and reach a sufficient power level. This element of the game is far too

easy and it is almost impossible not to qualify. Then some kind of throw shurikens at you. These pointed stars, aimed high, medium or low and coming at you at a variety of speeds must be deflected with your trusty sword.

The graphics, although large and colourful are fairly crude and are accompanied by various flat western grooves. The game though has no lasting appeal, and even at the budget price, cannot be recommended.

G.R.H.

KNIGHT GAMES
 English Software
 C64 12/89

7 8 9 10

THIS TITLE COULD JUST AS well be called The Cold Summer Games, fight medieval combats for you to try. So against an adversary (either human or computer) and two distinctly based archery contests.

The object of the game is very much to knock your opponent before he does likewise to you. Each player starts with 10 shields and each shield consists of 10 rows. A successful back removes a row from your adversary's total and the game ends when either player runs out of shields or time runs out - nicely depicted by wax dripping from a candle.

The combat spots are two sword fights, quarterstaff, jousting, a battle on and - my favourite - the ball and chain - a sort of contest for ground speed for each event, you have four aggressive and four defensive manoeuvres available to you as well as moving left and right. You can also try shaking wooden horses with the long iron and moving targets with the cross bow.

The whole game is very nicely animated with some excellent backdrops and some appropriate music although I preferred to turn this off and listen to the sound of weapons against bones. The game is on a multi load tape



and for once, I had no problems with it whatsoever. A highly enjoyable game to

play with the added advantage of being very well presented. G.R.H.

ARAC
 Addictive Games
 C64

11 12 13 14



ARAC IS A DROID AND AS such has only a limited range of actions. He can move left and right, jump and fire a net. But, if he can find two extra legs and the power globe, he can transform into Arachnidroid with the ability to fall upwards and fire energy bolts.

Only in that form can he hope to deactivate the three reactors. Even then, he might need a little help from his friends.

Assorted creatures inhabit the complex and by firing his net at the right moment, Arac can capture them. These

creatures can then be summoned at a later date to help Arac in exchange for their freedom. Rays will block out the radar systems. Beams can cut through solid walls, stingers can give you extra high jumps when no rock happens will help you open the falls when you find it. You can build up to eight of each type in your cage and activate them by accessing an icon screen.

The game must be completed within a time limit but ends sooner if your energy runs out.

G.R.H.

PROJECT NOVA

Graphics
 C-16



FOR PROJECT NOVA READ Star Trek. If this means nothing to you then this game is modelled on one of the golden eras of the

computer world.

The galaxy has been straddled by an alien force and they have already taken over many sectors of your space

map. By hyperspacing to these locations you must defeat them all in battle and free the galaxy.

To help you, you have two laser cannons and a missile set of shields - green, amber and red. Green is a defenceless state, enter combat in this state you won't last long. Amber is suitable for a single opponent but red will be needed for serious battles.

Using your on-board computers you are given a display showing the galaxy grid map which indicates the number of ships in each sector. Selecting a destination using two intersecting colours but you zoom off through a tremendously effective 3D space warp to face the foe.

As you do battle damage occurs and you have to repair your ship quickly or run for it. Everything you do takes energy and this can be replaced by resting in a cleared zone or by hyperspacing to an empty square on the map.

As you gradually mop up the empire your command rating goes up towards legendary, the highest status in the universe.

Graphics really seems to have come to terms with the C-16, the action seeming very realistic indeed. Excitement and a little planning make this an excellent game.

R.D.



FRANK BRUNO'S BOXING

Film
 C-16



AMBITIOUS BUT SUCCESSFUL is the way I'd describe this boxing simulation. Personally I'm not a fan of the pugilistic pastime but a computer version is bloodless and bulletless so it's OK by me.

The graphics are really outstanding with the view of the ring showing Bruno's back as the faces his opponent. The punches and feet are controlled by keyboard presses but these

are not re-definable so hard luck if you don't like them. This method of control is simpler and could have been simplified if the American boys had been used.

Bruno's opponents are loaded individually from tape but you must beat each one to progress to the next. This is because there is an entry code awarded but once you know the code you can skip the defeated contenders in



future sessions.

The three opponents on the tape are Canadian Crusher, King Kong Chapp and Andre Pancherodex in order of difficulty. Each has his own characteristic style and you must beat them at Light, Middle and Heavyweight before you get the code for the next fighter. Each fight lasts three minutes and you must knock the other guy down three times to win.

The screen display shows the opponents cartoon faces in the opposite top corners but the interesting details fill the space between. These details show the status of your opponent, your own status and elapsed time.

Every C-16 collection should include this game, it's a knockout!

R.D.



BOMB JACK

Elite
C-16



THE WONDERS OF LITE'S HANDS were used by Tekken the makers of the original Bomb Jack arcade machine's only ail because the backing seems to cause maintenance problems than its worth. For most of the game Bomb Jack seems to be flying about with a face around him. Although the Sphires with his insouciant smile does make an interesting screen, it detracts from the quality of the gameplay.

Around the sphires screen are a number of ledges with bombs resting on them. The upper ledges are patrolled by little men and a giant bird.

Insert or something flies between the ledges in pursuit of Jack.

The little men gradually get tired of patrolling the same old ledge and stop to progressively lower ledges until they reach the bottom of the screen. Here they mutate into large black balls which float around the screen adding to Jack's problems.

Bonus disks are supposed to appear but I've yet to see any.

This game could have been the best C16 game on the market but the combined screen rate is much lower.

G.B.



HERCULES

Alpha Omega
C64 11/89

A STRANGE LITTLE PLATFORM game with poor graphics and sound together with a heavy choice of colour schemes does not immediately appear to have a lot going for it. But for some reason, Hercules is strangely addictive. You control the Greek Hero as he tries to solve the 12 labours set kindly King Eurystheus.

Each labour consists of two or more associated screens and herein lies the problem. You have very little idea of what you are supposed to be doing. Frequently, large areas of the screen appear blank and you must leap into the unknown

hoping that a platform will miraculously appear underneath you. There are ropes to be climbed, platforms that collapse under you and assorted nasties to be avoided. Everything that you do though must be done quickly. Platforms under you quickly burst into flames and there is also a time limit on most screens.

Hercules needs a lot of experimentation if you are to get anywhere and this seems to put a lot of people off the game. Certainly, a error poll in the office resulted in a 50/50 split of those who loved it or loathed it.

G.B.



SPLIT PERSONALITIES

Demarc
C64



BASED ON THE OLD sliding block puzzles in which you move pieces of a picture round a board attempting to reconstruct the original, Split Personalities is a highly original variation on a theme in which the likes of Bonnie, Maggie and Sir Clive hopefully appear before your very eyes.

The first difference that you notice is that the board starts off empty, floating on pieces as and when you want them. Pieces continue to slide until they either hit a wall or another block. Gaps periodically appear in some

of the walls allowing you to return unwanted bits of puzzle to the stockpile.

Each screen must be completed against the clock. A nice touch is that there is a small completed picture highlighting exactly where your current piece should go. Control is straightforward but I didn't feel that the game was as responsive to my touch as it might have been. Nevertheless, an original and highly entertaining game to play.

G.B.

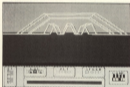
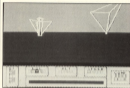


MERCENARY - THE

SECOND CITY

Navigator
 CMI - Berlin

9 8 10 9 9



REMEMBER MERCENARY?

If you don't then rush out and buy it immediately so that you can try the Second City. If you do dash out and buy this data disk.

Back already? OK, Mercenary is Novagen's test de force. In the first game you had crash landed in the middle of a civil war on the planet Targ but the Paljans and Mechanooids are still going at it hammer and tong.

Again you must decide whose side you're on but your decision is totally arbitrary because all you're interested in is the cash which will buy you your escape.

In Mercenary you were building above and below Central City but now you find yourself in the deep south in the grip of a long, long winter. The Paljan Commander's

brother-in-law is the prison governor here and he has his deadly eye on you from the start.

As in the first game you have to buy your first ship on the planet. Although the price is still the same, other commodities are more expensive than they used to be.

The graphics in this game is up to the high standard of Mercenary. For those who haven't seen it, Targ is shown in wire frame 3D style, like this. Unlike the, the graphics move very quickly as you skim the planet's surface in your search for an elevator. Along the way you can meet at the architectural delight of Targ, created by Wallace, the planet's greatest architect. Phallines with index trigger fingers can fire a soldier or two

at some of these buildings but be warned, the Targian's won't take such disrespect lying down.

The 3D effects are tremendous and you're not limited to merely stepping along the ground. If you turn upwards to 90 degrees your ship will zoom heavenward where you can stop and look back to see the city. Then, far below, you can see the streets laid out in a grid which you can draw before zooming back down to the surface for a soft landing.

When you bought your ship, the Paljan sent a message stating the location of one of their lifts. On reaching the correct place you may descend into the subterranean city.

Your next task is to find the briefing room which is an easier task than in Central City, but finding useful objects is harder. The Mechanooid briefing room is around here as well so you can easily decide who's side you're on.

Access to the Mechanooid's hideout is not easy. The briefing room only has three strange triangular doors which, we are told, lead to the author's cheat rooms. These are locked and only he has the key.

The game now follows a maze game pattern but beware, the dirty tricks brigade have set traps. One which I found very quickly

was the entrance to the prison. This is a total dead end. When you turn around after entering the door has disappeared and the only option appears to be quitting from the game, or is it?

Quitting does not mean ending the game, as you may think. You reappear on the planet surface in a vehicle but without any of the useful objects which you may have picked up underground. Once more you have to find the lift. What do you mean, you've forgotten the location? Nothing left but to systematically search for another lift.

Second City is for those who really enjoyed the first game. It is not so very different in style to its predecessor. The wire framed buildings are still the same and the markings on the doors have not changed in meaning. It is, however, much harder to succeed.

Some burrowses tracks take the form of billboards. One with the Commodore logo, another with the Atari logo and a third with the name of one of the author's previous creations. Hitting the IBM logo gives the same 'treasure' response as before and hitting the Atari/Gravell being congratulations. Don't go for the third sign though, it will bring the author's curse down around your ears. Things are going to get harder in the third, so be warned.

> ACTION REPLAY



MIND PURSUIT

UK Gold
114/99
C64



GENERAL KNOWLEDGE games are enjoying a great deal of interest at the moment, thanks to the way Trivial Pursuit has grabbed popular attention. Mind Pursuit bases its style on the original concept of categorised questions but translates the board game into a suitable form for the computer medium.

The board is replaced by a striking pathway of stepping stones which each player must negotiate. Each correctly answered question allows you to move on a step or two depending on the difficulty level and at several points you are given the opportunity to choose a short cut of difficult questions or continue on your way with safer options.

The point values of the squares are 25, 50 and 100, for 25 points you simply have to say if a statement is true or false. Fifty points are awarded if you answer a question correctly from a series of four optional responses. To gain 100 points you have to type in your own answer to a question.

The high scoring option has a pitfall. Even though it allows you to omit a letter to get one letter wrong, the answer still has to be substantially the same as the one given. For example, 'boy scout' is a correct response to a question but 'scout' would be deemed incorrect. Although some of my fellow players moaned like crazy

about this, I thought it was a valid attitude. In my time I've played against question masters who have applied the same rule in the board game.

After Mandoe Trivia I was set to complain bitterly about the American bias of the questions but not here. The sport questions are very American but if these are treated as 'stinkos' the majority of the other questions are fair enough. Only one question really annoyed me and that was 'in the popular nursery rhyme, who chased the weasel?' (no the answer isn't 'pop').

I don't know if there are plans to release extra question databases for the game but I hope so. There is no facility for building up your own questions and I found that many of the questions were repeated during a second playing of the game. On two occasions in a game the same question occurred twice.

Some of the questions use graphics or music which is a good example of using the computer's capabilities to the full.

Each player in turn presses a key to stop a running number generator. The value given selects the area on which the question will be asked. The six categories are: sports and games, science and nature, history and geography, TV and film or culture, throwing a six gives you a general knowledge Crab Bag question which

gives you the chance of an extra turn if you answer it correctly.

The game is only available on disk and each side of the disk has questions ranging from simple to extremely difficult. A limit can be set on the response time, a score limit can be set or an overall time limit. The adds variety to the game. It's just a pity that the response time can't be set for individual players to handicap those retaining knowledge that always seems to be pined against.

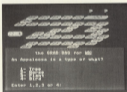
At the end of each game a scoreboard is presented which shows the percentage of correct responses given by each player. In the case of a drawn game this can be used to determine the victor. Apart from this, it is interesting to see how your overall performance measures and means that a one player game can be just as much fun as the

full four player game.

There appears to be a slight problem with the screen display which probably results from the difference between British and American mains supplies. The screen is split using an interrupt and the line between the board and the question area flickers a row of characters in an extremely irritating way.

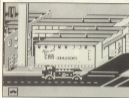
The problems of syntactically correct answers is offset slightly by a comprehensive guide to the instructions. As a result Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish players will probably turn up on UK Gold's doorstep with number on their mind when they read that the correct response to a question whose answer is Great Britain should be typed in as England!

A good game but I'm still waiting for the perfect Trivia C64.



HOT WHEELS

UK Gold
£14.95
C44 + (jw64)



HOT WHEELS IS BASED ON Mattel's top cars of the same name and is aimed at the ladies. It sports a new concept called Computer Activity Taps inspired by US Gold's from America's excellent Topa company (Summer Games, Impossible Mission, etc).

To say that this is a brilliant game would be like saying that the Sun is a newspaper. The programming standard is as high as usual but the gameplay which results from all this effort does not go far enough.

At the start of the game you have to select your car from the showroom or build it yourself in the factory. The showroom can resemble the Hot Wheels range but the CDF cars are created by selecting a front, middle and rear section from the range available in the workshop.

In both cases the overall colour of the car has to be selected in the paint shop. The car is then sprayed with clouds of colour and then is ready for the road.

When you find yourself outside the car showroom waiting to fit the road. As you travel around there are several options for you to choose from: you can go for a carwash or park in a multi-story carpark and change your car again. The only really interesting part is the demolition derby station. After the fun about choosing a car colour I was

disappointed to find that the demolition car is always red.

The action is seen in perspective with the four cars represented by coloured blocks. As the cars bump into one another gradually become misshapen until they turn into grey wrecks. At any point you can leave the stadium and return to normal life in your old car.

With nothing much to do in this part of town, you'll soon be itching to whizz along the expressway and investigate the other part of town. This trip is done in automatic gear. In other words you sit and watch as the car does its own thing, eventually reaching the other location (Jelly's) the car on the wrong side of the road, daddy!

In this part of town you can top up your petrol, change oil, remove the engine or swap your car for a shiny, red fire engine. These activities provide a bit of fun to the game especially catching the droppings of which seems to drain from all over the car body.

None could have been made of this section. It's the price of the petrol shown but not used as part of the game! Surely it would be more fun to earn money at the demolition derby and spend it on the services in this part of town? Running out of petrol and badly running engines could have made this much more entertaining and

would give greater purpose to the game.

On the good side, tuning the engine and operating the fire engine takes a bit of thought.

To tune each piston you have to use your eyes and ears. The performance of each piston in turn is represented by a sine wave and a sound. An ideal curve and sound is given as a reference and the idea is to match the current piston's performance to this. After each piston is set the two waveforms are compared and success gives a green light display.

One of the houses has a habit of bursting into flames and the race is on to collect the fire engine and douse the flames before the house burns down. Changing from

your current car means parking it in the fire station garage with its top and rear door. Then the fire engine can emerge from its garage and dash off to the configuration.

On arrival at the fire, the water tank is shown and the idea is to douse the flames in each window before the water runs out. Fail in your task and the house burns down before your very eyes.

This could have been a superb entertainment if just a little more thought had been put into it. As it stands it provides about half an hour's entertainment and I was left with the feeling that playing with the actual toys would have greater appeal to most children. **E.D.**



SUMMING UP



Gordon Hamlett explains

**how Articsoft can help you
balance your books.**

WHENEVER SOFTWARE GETS bundled with a computer, it is a pretty good bet that the three packages included will be a word processor, a database and a spreadsheet. The first two are familiar terms to most home micro users, but by and large, spread sheets have always been associated with businesses.

If you ask a non user what a spread sheet is, a typical response might be "something to do with accounts or financial forecasting". Is it reasonable to assume that this tool too will find a place in the home, and if so, what will people use it for? Cal-Kit from Articsoft almost certainly is home users and there are some 28 initial ideas as to how it might prove helpful.

A spreadsheet is really no more than a very large sheet of paper divided up into rows and columns. It allows you to make calculations on a given set of figures, for example your household expenses, and then re-calculate things quickly and simply without the need to rewrite the whole thing if, say, the mortgage rate changes. It can be used for anything greater than checking your bank balance or working out how many rolls of wallpaper you need to decorate the lounge or, on a higher level, managing your company's finances. One term often associated with spreadsheets is "what if?" This is because it is easy to work out problems such as "What if I increase the price by 10% but lose 2% of my sales as a result?".

One of the worst things about using a

program like this is if you load it in and are presented with a series of rows and columns and you have absolutely no idea what to do next. It is here that Cal-Kit comes into its own. Not only do you get an easy to follow tutorial in the instruction manual, but you also get 20 previously designed forms, all of which come in two formats. The first has sample figures already loaded in to show you the sort of results to expect and the second is left blank for you to use your own figures. If the design of the form is not quite to your liking, the tutorial shows you how you can easily change it. For example, you might not have a car and so have no use for a row giving details of motor expenses but prefer to substitute it for terming your children's school fees.

It is these templates that make the package easy to use and if for one would not have bothered setting up my own sheets if I had nothing to go on. Amongst the templates included are: home budget, petty cash, conversion, starting a business and calculating loan repayments.

So how does it all work? As I have mentioned, the sheet is divided up into a series of rows and columns. In Cal-Kit, the maximum size of the sheet is 26 columns (A-Z) by 99 rows (1-99). By referring to its co-ordinates, you can easily address any particular cell e.g. C34 or K16. The content of each cell can be text, numeric or formula. An example taken from the home budget template will show how it all fits together.

In the first column, you write down details of the various items of income and expenditure - salary, rent, travel etc. These are all text cells as are the labels for the next 12 columns - January, February etc. In the appropriate cell,

you enter the relevant amount. For example, if cell B2 represents salary for January and you earned £280, you enter 280 in cell B2. This would be a numerical cell. If all your outgoings for January were in cells B30 through to B39 and you wanted to know your total expenses, you get the program to total cells B30 to B39 and to put the result in B42. This is an example of a formula cell. Having input all your figures, you can quickly get answers for your next income or see how much you are spending on beer on a month by month breakdown.

The program itself is very easy to use. A help screen is always available if you need it and there are several facilities designed to make life as simple for you as possible. A typical example is the replicate command. Say you have just entered a formula to add up all the expenses for January and want to do the same for the rest of the year, a simple command allows you to copy the formula across without having to write it out a dozen times. Sheets can be loaded from and saved to disk and be printed out if required. If you use Paperclip word processor, you can integrate the sheet into a report or a begging letter to your bank manager.

The acid question is, I suppose, would I use it myself and the answer is probably yes. The frequency is not through any fault of the program, I would recommend that without hesitation to anyone who has a lot of figures to work problems. It is just that I can't come to terms with the fact that my days are numbered!

Touchline

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SUMMING UP

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 3490 047402,8,8,8,8,8,8,8,8,
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Allen Webb gives

kernel routines and

floating points the

once over.

BEFORE STARTING WORK this month, I want to plug two books which are invaluable to the machine code user. Both are by Nick Hangghini, Richard Franklin and Carl Graham.

1) *The Commodore 64 ROMs Annotated*. This is a fully annotated source code of the ROMs contents and is the best I've seen.

2) *Advanced Commodore 64 Basic*. This gives an in-depth description of the functioning of Basic with a particularly good chapter on floating point operations.

From now on, as a matter of convention, I will signify the registers holding a 16 bit address as (low byte/high byte). For example, the routine at \$A81E which prints a string requires the start address in the accumulator (low byte) and in the Y register (high byte). In my short hand, this is represented by (A/Y). OK!

Kernel Routines

You may frequently want to LOAD or SAVE data to disk or cassette. There are kernel routines to handle both of these. Before SAVING or LOADING, there are two other routines necessary to set up the file details. These are SETUP and SETNAM.

SETUP

This routine, called from \$F83A, sets up a logical file. It is called with the device number in the X register, the logical file number in the accumulator and the secondary address in the Y register.

SETNAM

This routine sets up the name of the file. It is called at \$F8B2 with the start address of the name in the X and Y registers and the length of the name in the accumulator. If you don't want to give the file a name, set the accumulator to zero before calling the routine.

WELCOME TO THE MACHINE

These routines must be called before calling the SAVE or LOAD routines.

Load

This routine is called from \$F8D2. The accumulator is set to zero if you want to make a load of 16 bytes to zero a file. If you have set the secondary address to zero when you called SETUP, you must supply the start address in the (A/Y) registers. If the secondary address was one, the file loads to the address in its header.

To save these routines out, they work as they are with both disk and cassette.

As I will show later, it is possible to set up files in a master way by use of routines in the Basic ROM.

Although the kernel has some handy routines, it is the Basic ROM which is the real mine of handy bits and pieces. Before I launch into this ROM, however, I must bend your minds with a little theory on the use of floating point.

Floating Point

Floating point representation is a complex system so I will only touch on the subject. We have already used eight and 16 bit integer numbers. The problem is, how do we represent decimals! The answer is in five or six bits! When floating point numbers are being manipulated, the six byte unpacked system is used. When a number is being saved in RAM, a more efficient five byte packed format is used. The number is represented by four bytes which make up the mantissa. In packed format, bit seven of the most significant mantissa byte holds the sign bit. In unpacked format, the sign is kept in the extra byte. The final byte holds the exponent. The exponent decides the position of the decimal point.

MAN represents the most significant byte of the mantissa and MA the least significant byte. A floating point number is given by:

DECKPOINT-128 * (1+(M) AND 127)+(A)2+0+M+256 / (256-128)

If packed format is used, the sign is incorporated by multiplying that lot by:

(-1)^(M AND 128)

See what I mean about complicated. It also explains why floating point operations are so slow! If you want to know more about it, try the

Listing 1

```
10 LOAD LDA # 1 ; logical file number
20 LDA DEV ; device
30 LDA # 1 ; secondary address
40 SR BITBA ; set logical file
50 LDA MAMELEN ; name length
60 LDA # < BUFFER ; name least significant byte
70 LDA # > BUFFER ; name most significant byte
80 SR BITFD ; set file name
90 LDA # 0 ; we want to load
100 SR BITFD ; perform load
110 RTS
```

Save

This routine is called from \$F8D8. Rather more information is required before RAM can be saved. We need to know the start and end addresses of the block of RAM. This is achieved in quite a neat way. The start address of the block is stored in a pair of zero page locations in the usual low/high format. The accumulator is loaded with the low byte of this pair. The end address plus one is stored in (A/Y) and the routine called. Listing 2 saves a block of RAM from address 5A to address FA. The basic assumptions are as in listing 1.

Listing 2

```
10 SAVE LDA DEV ; device number
20 LDA # 0 ; logical file number
30 LDA # 0 ; secondary address
40 SR BITBA ; set logical file
50 LDA MAMELEN ; name length
60 LDA # < BUFFER ; name least significant byte
70 LDA # > BUFFER ; name most significant byte
80 SR BITFD ; set name
90 LDA # < 5A ; start address 16b
100 STA MA ; into location MA
110 LDA # > 5A ; start address 8b
120 STA MA ; into location MA
130 LDA # MA ; location holding start address 16b
140 LDA # < FA ; start address 16b
150 LDA # > FA ; start address 8b
160 SR BITFD ; perform save
170 RTS
```

books cited earlier.

The floating point routines use two floating point accumulators for storing data. FAC # 1 and FAC # 2. FAC # 1 occupies locations \$60 to \$66 inclusive (\$67 is the exponent and \$68 the sign) and FAC # 2 occupies locations \$69 to \$6E inclusive (\$69 is the exponent and \$6E the sign). Some other zero page locations are also used.

Just bear in mind what floating point numbers are for and we will look at their manipulation later.

I want to describe a number of handy routines for

the conversion of integer and floating point numbers.

First, there are three routines which will convert a floating point number in FAC # 1 to an integer. They accept integers in various ranges.

5B1AA

This routine takes a floating point number in the range -32767 to 32767 and converts it to an integer in (A/9).

5B1BB

This routine takes a floating point number in the range zero to 32768 and converts it to an integer in (B0/50).

5B7F7

This routine takes a floating point number in the range zero to 65535 and converts it to an integer in (D0/50).

5BCCC

If you want to perform the equivalent of INT, this routine converts FAC # 1 to an integer and then outputs it into FAC # 1.

5B391

Converts an integer in the range 0 to 12767 in (Y/A) to a floating point number in FAC # 1.

5BDD0

Converts the value in FAC # 1 into a string terminated by 0 and returns with the start address of the string in (A/9). This is the same format as the print string routine in 5ABE. To print a floating point number in FAC # 1, simply use:

```
158 5BDD0
159 5ABE
```

A routine at 5BDDP does this in one go liberally saving three bytes.

5B0B5

This routine performs a function similar to VAL in that it converts a string starting at (D0/5D) and length in the accumulator to a number in FAC # 1.

OK, that's all for this time. Next month I'll continue with the Basic ROM and discuss how to pass parameters to machine code.

Listing 3

```
10 *-#C000
20 FLAG = 1000
30 LDA #0
40 STA FLAG ;CLEAR FLAG
50 START JSR #FFEA ;SCAN KEYBOARD
60 BNC OUT ;KEY PRESSED
70 LDA FLAG ;CHECK FLAG
80 BEQ REV ;FLAG#0
90 SEC FLAG ;ZERO FLAG
100 LDA #140 ;TURN OFF REVERSE FIELD
110 JSR #FFD2
120 JMP PMESS ;PRINT MESSAGE
130 REV INC FLAG ;SET FLAG TO 1
140 LDA #1 ;SET REVERSE FIELD
150 JSR #FFD2
160 PMESS LDX #0
170 LDY #7
180 CLC
190 JSR #FFF0 ;SET CURSOR POSITION
200 LDA #MESSAGE
210 LDA #MESSAGE
220 JSR #AB1E ;PRINT MESSAGE
230 JMP START ;BACK TO START
240 OUT RTS
250 MESSAGE .ASC "PRESS ANY KEY TO CONTINUE"
260 .BYTE 0
```

Homework To Part 7

Last month's homework was a mixed bag. Question 1 asked you to provide a routine prepending for a key press. Here is one solution:

In order to save space, the

routine uses just one message with FLAG deciding whether or not the message is written in reverse field. You should recognize all the ROM calls from earlier parts of the series. The odd flashing effect

is due to interference between the flash and the screen scan. Press CTRL to see the effect of introducing a delay to slow down the flash rate.

Questions 2 and 3 were

Listing 4

```
30 *-#C000
40 START = #FB
50 FINISH = #FD
60 CHARADD = #FB
60 ;
61 JMP SETUP
62 JMP SCROLL
70 SETUP LDA #000 ;SET UP START AND END ADDRESS
80
80 STA START
90 STA FINISH
100 LDA #000
110 STA START+1
120 LDA #000
130 STA FINISH+1
140 LDA #DC0E ;TURN OFF INTERRUPTS
150 AND #254
160 STA #DC0E
170 LDA #01
180 AND #251
190 STA #01
200 LDY #0
210 LOOP LDA (START),Y ;MOVE CHARACTER TABLE TO #400
0
220 STA (FINISH),Y
```

```

230 CLC                                :BUMP ADDRESS
240 LDA START
250 ADC #1
260 STA START
270 LDA START+1
280 ADC #0
290 STA START+1
300 CLC
310 LDA FINISH
320 ADC #1
330 STA FINISH
340 LDA FINISH+1
350 ADC #0
360 STA FINISH+1
370 LDA START                                :FINISHED PRINT
380 RMB LOOP                                :NO - NEXT BYTE
390 LDA START+1
400 ORP #04
410 RMB LOOP                                :NO - NEXT BYTE
420 LDA #01                                :YES - REINSTATE INTERRUPTS
430 ORA #4
440 STA #01
450 LDA #0C0E
460 ORA #1
470 STA #0C0E
480 LDA #0010                                :ACTIVATE NEW CHARACTER SET
490 AND #340
500 ORA #12
510 STA #0010
520 RTS
530 |
540 |
550 SCROLL JER #4EFD :GET CHARACTER NUMBER
560 JER #ADGA
570 JER #D7F7
580 LDA #0
590 STA CHARADD+1
600 LDA #14
610 STA CHARADD                                :CHARACTER NUMBER TIMES 8
620 ASL CHARADD
630 ROL CHARADD+1
640 ASL CHARADD
650 ROL CHARADD+1
660 ASL CHARADD
670 ROL CHARADD+1
680 CLC
690 LDA CHARADD+1
700 ADC #30                                :ADD START ADDRESS OF CHARACT
DE TABLE
710 STA CHARADD+1
720 LDY #0
730 LOOP 1 CLC                                :ROLL FIRST BYTE
740 LDA (CHARADD),Y
750 ROL A
760 BCC LOOP2                                :WAS A SET BIT ROLLED INTO CA
RRY
770 ORA #00000001                                :YES, REPLACE IT
780 LOOP2 STA (CHARADD),Y
790 INY
800 CPY #0                                :FINISHED PRINT
810 BCC LOOP3                                :NO - NEXT BYTE
820 RTS

```

linked and involved redefined characters.

BY #002 moves the character set to 5000 and initializes the new set. BY #003 rolls the character 6 left one place e.g. to scroll A, use BY #003,1.

I'm feeling generous this month so there's only one question for your homework. Imagine that you are writing a simple adventure interpreter and that you have a table of the first four letters of each word in a vocabulary. For example:

TABLEORCATLENGTHS...

Words less than four letters long are padded with spaces (chr\$(12)).

I want a simple routine which does the following:

1) Prompts and inputs a string.

2) Takes the first four characters of the input and searches the table for a match.

3) If a match is found, a friendly message tells you of the position of the word in the table.

4) If no match is found, a message advises you accordingly.

5) The table may be limited to

255 characters (84 words).

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Eric Doyle looks at some
new utilities from Canada —
courtesy of Ardozsoft.

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I'VE HAD AN INCOMPATIBILITY PROBLEM between my 64 and printer for the past three or four years. The 64 works happily to its 40-column screen but my printer produces 80-column printouts.

My wordprocessor is my bread and butter, and each month I face the same problem of formatting my article piece into an intelligible document by switching from a 40-column composing screen to the double-stated output screen and then scrolling back and forth "windowing" my way around the page. Then I have to turn back to my decomposing screen to make any changes. I often think how nice it would be to have an 80-column screen and avoid this daily chore.

Of course there are ways around this problem such as using the favored wordpro which redefines characters to force a pseudo 80-column screen on to the normal Commodore screen but I also need a jumbo-sized database and spreadsheet screen.

After obtaining a copy of the excellent PaperClip wordpro and Consultant database, I noticed that the originating company, Batteries Included of Canada, had many other superb products. This fact has not escaped the ever watchful sales scouts of Ardozsoft and the result is the appearance of the BI-80 adaptor in the Ardozsoft catalogue.

Used with the 1201 and 1202 Commodore monitors, this 80-column adaptor slots in a 6545 video processor and Basic vdisk. Operating System into 8K of memory from \$6800 to \$4915. Existing software has to be adapted to fit the 80-column format and start around the essential screen operating system. As far as I can see this means using Batteries Included products at the moment but that's probably a plus, if you haven't already shelled out for a wordprocessor.

Installation is simplicity itself. Pop the unit into the cartridge port and connect the monitor using easy-to-follow instructions and supplied adaptor leads. In a matter of minutes your 64 is ready for crystal-clear, 80-column, monochrome working.

One major advantage over the 64's big, little sister is that switching from 40 to 80, and back again, is achieved by a 215 command thus avoiding the hassles normally associated with the 120's composite/RGB outputs. Using the 215 within a program is permissible but although I had no problems in switching in the 6400 processor and operating system without clearing its associated screen RAM, going in the opposite direction always resulted in a blank 40-column screen.

I found no real problems in using either PaperClip or The Consultant on the wide



screen even though I was not using either of the standard Commodore monitors. Trying it on the CBM 1201 the picture appeared even sharper.

Another problem I have with my printer is the self-imposed one of linking a Centronics machine to my 64 in preference to the discontinued Commodore model. To get a good listing to print in PETSCII code on an ASCII printer requires an adaptor. Once more the Ardozsoft/Batteries Included link-up makes to the rescue with 80 interface.

The attachment is a little messy because the unit attaches to the serial port and taps a power supply from the cassette port which means that the printer adaptor dangles off the back of my computer by two leads. A third lead then trails off to my printer. This is made even worse because I also use a disk drive on the serial port so the lead to the adaptor has to stretch across to the daisy-chaining output from my 1201 to allow the disk drive to be linked into the system. Aesthetically this is unpleasing but it is a common problem with most similar adaptors so you just have to get used to the idea or do as I do. By raising the computer on wooden wedges you can tack the unit under the back of the 64 and out of sight.

Cassette-based system users may be throwing their hands up in honor at the thought of sacrificing their cassette port for a mere power tap. I'm pleased to say that the back of the plug has a duplicate cassette connector so that both units can be used in tandem with no ill effects.

Once installed a few switches have to be set according to the type of printer on the other end. You can opt for the usual device number four or select five if another printer, such as a daisywheel, is linked into the system. A second switch controls the PETSCII/ASCII converter which (I'll explain in a minute). The third switch acts as a CAPS lock and the final switch will add line feeds for those printers which fail to recognise 'return' commands.

The converter switch does not actually send out the various graphic symbols of the PETSCII code but converts them to the kind of abbreviations which are found in the Basic listings in Your Commodore. For example, the reversed Q which symbolizes a cursor down, C-BEAT, will appear as DWN in listings. This has two advantages, the adaptor will work on a wide range of ASCII compatible printers and the listings produced are clear and

unambiguous. Some of the abbreviations could be better but you get used to what you're given!

Gathering dust in a cupboard, I have a 4840 dual disk drive which could simplify disk backup procedures. OK, I can struggle along with two 1541s but I need a special program which always means slowing down the duplication process. The 4840 DOS has useful commands like BACKUP which can only work on the older disk systems because all 1541s have a drive number of 2000 and these commands work on drives with number 2000 and one. Hence the insistence on using a drive number with disk commands on the 1541 when this is rarely necessary because the default value is zero. Hence a case of syntactic good practice than necessity.

Off the hobby horse and back to the

lead can be left in place, even when the interface is removed. Apart from this increased flexibility to your system you also get VxDOS6 to enable you to use it to best advantage.

Before I leave the two AmigaSoft ranges I would just like to give a plug for the aforementioned software packages which, for my money, give the best value available.

PaperClip is available for 40-column CGA and 80-column CGA and EGA, allowing printouts up to 200 columns wide. All three versions appear on the same disk so no upgrading problems there. A dongle to plug into your joystick port comes with each pack sold which at least means that you can back up your disk easily.

What you get for your money is a wordprocessor which approaches perfec-

the production of form letters and associated address files is a breeze to maintain. For the uninitiated, a form letter is one in which the text remains the same but names, addresses and any other nominated details are read in from a file to customize or personalize what would otherwise be a general circular.

Other wordpro look at text blocks as page width chunks but PaperClip can select vertical sections of any width so that tables of figures can easily be moved or transposed with the minimum of fuss. The columns can even be sorted into alphabetical or numerical order without leaving the program!

Adding to this full printer control, the ability to pass to change a delayed wait with a screen message to say which one, the ability to produce linked, or global, files and you have a very useful tool rather than a glorified typewriter.



review. The third BI product is called BusCard II and it allows the cartridge port to interface with Centronics or IEEE-488 equipment. Earlier CSM machines relied heavily on the IEEE connection and many bargains can still be found in secondhand outlets. The interface has three outputs: the normal cartridge port connector, a parallel output and the IEEE bus. System conformation is determined by a bank of eight switches allowing communication with a total of seven devices numbered four to 10.

Connection of the BusCard necessitates delving into the innards of the 64 to find the ROM resistor to which a clip is connected. Although the instructions go out of their way to describe accurately where the connection point is, the words fail to hit the mark. Terms such as 'right' and 'bottom' are subjective and rely upon your viewpoint and conception of these terms. In their ascending quest for clarity, BI includes two unambiguous photographs to clarify any doubts that the verbal description may leave. Nice try but the important area of these photos is so dense that any detail is lost in a black blur.

Once the connection has been made

tion even though by state-of-the-art standards a few improvements could be made.

For example, pop-up menus and precision positioning features would help. This includes the fact that pressing the 'return' key halves along a line erases the rest of that line. Normally this is something you can get used to but after a long night it can have disastrous results. Here speaks the voice of experience! Early one morning while writing another gem for your Commodore editor please note my plea for attention!, I decided to amend an earlier piece of text which I had written. Next morning, or later that day, I discovered that I'd fallen asleep at the keyboard, my hand had rested on the 'return' key and effectively erased a substantial portion of text. Luckily, I'd saved to disk recently so no major harm was done but I couldn't help wondering 'What if?'

Apart from all of the usual facilities such as search and replace, text block movement, appending files and so on, the program has many extra facilities which raise it way above the rest. The ability to define commonly used phrases as a variable can save a lot of typing time and

The Consultant is perhaps not as revolutionary but its main advantage is that it is very easy to build up a database from scratch. User friendliness is not something I associate with this branch of file management but I have no complaints with either the 'base development' or the report creation systems in this package.

Multipage records add to the flexibility of information storage and retrieval. Once your base is established, you can even produce a file suitable for form letter creation for use with PaperClip.

One area I've not covered with any of these products is the one of cost. Really it all depends on what you want from your system. For the home-user PaperClip's facilities would be dominant and 40-columns would be an expense which could be avoided. For the professional or serious user it's all a matter of need. One thing I will say is that any of the products are worth examining but the peripheral interfaces are in a highly competitive market where costs and facilities can vary widely.

My only regret is that I run have to pack everything away and return it. Hope the Editor's got a crowbar to release my grip on these goodies.

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.....
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Name three sportsmen whose names have been used in the titles of Commodore games.
1
2
3
- 5. Entertainment**
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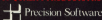
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MACH

6666

Steve Carle answers some of your queries about his Mach assembler series.

SINCE THE PUBLICATION OF MY Mach Assembler series, several people have written into the office reporting various bugs. Most of these problems have occurred with the MONITOR and MACRO sections of the system, the ASSEMBLER is so far causing no problems.

Some of the letters I have received, have reported problems which have not shown up on my version of the system. I suspect that due to the lack of checksum error checking on the Basic listings these have been caused by mistakes during entry of the program.

The Monitor

I'll deal first with the MONITOR. The TTY command seems to be causing problems again, it would seem that it will not work correctly with disk-oriented commands. I'm afraid that, without a complete rewrite of the program, nothing can be done about this. TTY will still work with MCR and other non-disk commands (and also with the D command of the Mach 4 extension). If you require a listing of your source code, I suggest that you exit to Basic and simply LOAD and LIST the program to the printer since the Mach 1 editor uses the same area of memory and the same format as a normal Basic program.

OK, first the TTY command. Below is a reprint of the Mach 3 printer alterations which first appeared in the April issue of Four Commodors. In addition to this, an ORG change

(address \$046E) is included to prevent the excessive linefeeds during printer list. Note that the changes originally included for the Assembler are not shown here since the assembler accesses the disk drive, it will not allow the assembly listing to be sent to the printer. Make the changes in the order shown.

Use the M function of the MONITOR to alter the following:

```
8891 should be 04
8895 should be 04
88A2 should be 04
8460 should be 4C
88A4 should be 08
```

Next, change the following sequence of bytes:

```
address 8880 28 23 67 AD AF 83 88 85 8A
8A 28 A8 8E 88 28 52 87 4C 83 8E
address 90A0 28 A8 8E 9C 83 03 00 80 42
04 28 C3 FF A5 84 8E 8A 80
address 88E2 20 80 80
address 84A4 20 80 80
address 8885 4C A8 8E
address 887E 8A 8A 4C A8 8E
```

Now save the MONITOR as follows:

```
% MACH 8000,8000 for original version.
% MCH 7800,8000 for the extended version (Mach 4).
```

The Macro

Now for the MACRO processor. Firstly, the save addresses given originally were, I think, incorrect. The same option is

```
% MACRO 8000,9C00
```

First, load and run the MONITOR, now exit to Basic and enter the original Basic listings of the Macro Processor.

Now the JMR bug can be solved by writing the byte at address 9819 to 80 (hex). Further improvements can be

made by setting the following sequence of bytes at address \$206.

```
address 0206 A8 98 40 03 C8 C8 D0 00
```

Now you can save the Macro Processor using the above 5 command. This should correct the MACRO problems.

Some of the letters received asked specific questions and the section that follows attempts to answer them.

The MONITOR DIR command will list the directory of any 1541/1520 formatted disk (unprotected).

The HEX and DEC commands were originally included to allow the user to enter the display data in either HEX or DEC format. Both should work the same (apart from the said format) and return to the > prompt.

Some printing errors did occur in the original series of articles (like missing a dot >= <=).

The M command will display only eight byte values per line in HEX or DEC mode.

ERECTing this series of programs would probably require a rewrite and since a better version has now been written I doubt it would be a good idea.

I don't think that the legendary bug in the early 14 ROM will affect the writer.

I think I've covered just about everything, however if anyone has any further problems with this system, then write to: Steve Carle, 10 Elm Hill, Ardross, Tayside, Scotland DD7 4ES.

I would like to thank everyone who wrote to me: W Reynolds, Strathclyde, County Londonderry; G Bakers, Buckley, Cheshire; T Clavers, Hy Cambridgeshire; E Rice, Rosedale, Essex; Yvan Faur Clem, England; NW Nunnally, K Faur, Portsmouth; D Brown, Kilnarnock, Ayrshire and Jim Wiseman, Darlington, County Durham.

COMMUNICATION

David Janda brings you more news and views from the communications world.

FIRST OFF, REMEMBER A COUPLE OF months ago I provisioned the Voyager 2 modem from Madson House, together with the new Mustang computer from T3 Computing? Well in the process I mentioned that I couldn't get the Voyager to auto-answer. It transpired that the model they sent me hadn't got an auto-answer board in it, neither has any Voyager 2, with a serial number less than 1286. If you have a Voyager that doesn't auto-answer then send it back to Madson House (says MNI's Keith Bane). Keith is also at pains to point out that the basic price of the Voyager does include auto-answer as standard.

I was to have reviewed T3 Computing's Bulletin Board software this month, but the editor (Bob) and myself haven't managed to get down to T3's HQ. But according to Andy Muller, who runs the latest sixty-four bit area on Micronet (which has now moved to 508718) is very nice indeed. DS Inc. VAT and gdp gets you a very comprehensive scrolling-type BB package which can be used on the 64 or C128 with a single disk drive. Andy has managed to break the package a bit so it operates in Visidata format, and he has an up-to-date demo on it (9525-489124, 10PM-BANA, 1288-75 Visidata). T3 also has a demonstration board which shows off the package features (9525-50941, 7PM-PANA, 1288-75 scrolling).

Micronet

The big news this month is all about MUD (Multi User Dungeons). Micronet's mega-user PR person Peter Probert informed me about this new development a day before going to

Paris. Details are scarce, but here they are. The game should be up and running by the end of July in which case you may have already played it. The game itself is called Madon and is based on the original text MUD. When implemented on Micronet it will be open access to all Micronet subscribers; there'll be no extra subscription charge or anything like that. The game will be running a PDP-11, and I am informed that converting it to run in Visidata mode is a major achievement. No extra link software will be needed to play the game in this case with Compuserf MUD, yet there will be split-screens with named text displayed in Blue, and previous in Cyan. There will also be the ability to view past text.

Two key features make Micronet MUD rather interesting - capacity and price. Up to 64 people will be able to play simultaneously, which is double the norm. As far as price is concerned Micronet MUD will cost just 79p an hour all inclusive! Compared to Compuserf MUD which costs 15.75 per hour (no VAT), it would appear that Micronet MUD is exceptionally good value for money.

Turbo Chat (507447) has been improved to accommodate the four messages per page. It was still in development stages at the time of writing and is being offered free to users while on the development stage.

Compuserf

If you are not a subscriber to Compuserf then why not? I have been interested by writing editor MNI, ARSI, DMR and PANA, who are the business boys behind the MHC710 area at 149692 that the Hack Haven Guide To The Galaxy directory is the best now dit on Compuserf. Does this merit a special investigation by Communication Corner? Is it the best thing next to alcohol (and)? Would it interest Marvin? Citizens I haven't got a clue so why

don't you find out yourself.

Now the important stuff is out of the way, on with the show!

First, announcements. GOTOs, I know I have mentioned these before, but how they have been in operation for a month it's worth commenting on how effective they are. Before, to GOTO a particular area of interest you had to enter the page where the director was. Now areas of interest have a name rather than a number associated with them. Names are easier to remember and it has "opened up" Compuserf. GOTO NEWS, MEGA, COMMA and so on is so much easier!

Redirection is, the multi-user speed advert are from Compuserf well under development. At London at Compuserf informed me at the time of writing that 800 locations had been written so far. No specific date has been set for when it will be on line to all but late Autumn was mentioned. I have a little more news on the Telenet front. Compuserf intends to offer Telenet facilities around the end of August. To the best of my knowledge existing a Telenet will be as easy as using the COM user system, and the cost for a UK Telenet should be around 50p.

OK, things to look out for on Compuserf are: GOTO DEMOS, 'a whole new area' (and) as editor (and) part 1. Madon have now sent me some excellent stuff at GOTO 88 and Chess fans should GOTO CH95. Finally, GOTO of the month as far as I am concerned is the ICPLC area. Dave Martin (ID: DMR7) does a lot of work in this area as well as Mega Score (GOGO MEGA).

That's all folks! Next month I look at the T3 BB (I hope). A feature on a couple of Compuserf run BBs plus info on a public domain BB system from Canada!

It can be reached on the following systems: Teliconn Call 72-MACRMB7, Compuserf D.JANDA and One-To-One T408000.

CORNER

CREATIVE INCENTIVES

We review the Adventure

Creator from Incentive

Software.

AT LONG LAST, YOU HAVE FINISHED your masterpiece. The plot is better than Lord of the Rings and the problems would baffle even Sherlock Holmes. The only snag though is that you haven't got a clue about programming and it looks as if you will never be able to convert your ideas from paper to computer. Fear not though. Like all the best stories, this one has a happy ending. For those over the horizon, like a knight on a white charger, is the latest utility package from Incentive - the Graphic Adventure Creator.

Written originally for the Amstrad (when it received some reviews) the package allows you to turn your game into a professional looking product with quickly drawn pictures to accompany your text if you so desire. You can also market your product without having to pay any licensing fee to the authors although they do ask you to give them a plug somewhere in the game. Be warned though, you will not be able to sit down in front of your machine and start making lots of money just like that, there is an awful lot of preparation to be done first.

The main program - the creator itself - consists of a menu of various options available to you. From here you can define lists of words that will be "understood" by the program, save and load files, draw pictures and describe your locations etc. Before you start doing any of this, it is advisable to have a labelled map of your story complete with notes about the location of objects and details of the various problems to be solved in the game. The reason for this is nothing more sinister than that the logic behind creating an adventure is so complex, you simply will not be able to remember it all.

I found that it was easier if I started off by entering all my location descriptions. This gave me a handy framework to use when I started moving objects about and playing about with logic conditions. Each location is called a room although it can be anything that you want from a planet to a mailbox. Descriptions can be up to 200 characters long which seems more than adequate

as at this stage you have not yet decided the main or objects present. You are prompted in turn for the room number, its description, walls and picture associated with it (if any). You can also have as many rooms as you want up to a maximum of 9999. The only thing that holds you back is lack of memory and it is up to you to balance the size of the game against the amount of detail you require. You start off with just over 28k to play with although there is a lot of bit of data compression done by the program.

the same thing and so you create verb number 26 five times over, one for each of the synonyms.

Any messages that you want to appear in the text are similarly created. Nouns and objects are treated slightly differently though. A list of nouns is created as before but any variation in the form of a particular noun has to go in to the objects list. For example, assume that you want a bucket in your game so you define the noun bucket. In the object list, you then further define this as a bucket of water and an empty bucket -



A moat to the East surrounds a fortress of titanic proportions. The tunnel from which you came is North, and you can see a large door beyond the lowered drawbridge. You can also see a dead rat.
What now? ...

You should now think about creating lists of verbs and nouns that the program will understand. It is worth while loading the "Quick Start" file at this stage as it contains lists of the most commonly used words as well as some essential system messages that must be included in the game. These can be edited as you see fit although you must keep the meanings the same. This allows you to give your games a more personal touch - they won't keep coming up with the same messages as everybody else who has used GAC. Your list of verbs is simply entered. Assign each new word a unique number and that is all there is to it. If several words have the same meaning, then you give them all the same number. For example, you might want "hit", "attack" and "kill" to mean

the two forms that the bucket will take within the game. Objects have to be given the room number in which they appear.

Any object which has not yet put in an appearance or is to be removed from the game is assigned to room zero, a mythical location controlled by the program. To continue our example, you can set up the bucket of water in room 1 and the empty bucket in room zero. Then when the player empties the bucket, you simply get the program to swap the objects so that the empty bucket is now in room 1 and the bucket of water removed to room zero. Objects can also be assigned a weight or cost if you want to include those particular features in your game.

The program features a 700 word



You find yourself on the bank of a turbulent stream babbling along the base of the mountain itself. It is crossed by a stone bridge leading East to a dark cave entrance. You can also see an old oil lamp.

What now? . . .

variety with several advanced features. These include the ability to understand "it" as in "take the book and burn it" - as well as distinguishing every single word and not just the first four letters as in most similar programs. The parser can also cope with adverbs (open the chest carefully) and adjectives (get the iron key).

Once you have described all your words and rooms (and it is really very simple to do so since you have got the hang of it) you are ready to get involved in the nitty gritty of designing your adventure, namely putting in the logic. This is done by establishing a set of conditions and at first appears very, very extremely daunting. It will look that way at second and third appearance so take the time to sit down and re-read the instruction manual very carefully. The conditions are structured into three tiers - high priority, local and low priority. High priority involves things like whether you are dead and this is checked before the player inputs his command. Local conditions apply to the room that the player is in and might include things such as is the fire lit or is he carrying the key. Finally low priority conditions include general items such as inventory and score.

The conditions appear as a series of mnemonics and refer to specific verbs and nouns, controlled by the rules of logic. A typical entry might be "IF W088 20 AND NOUN IS MISS 35 WAIT END". This would translate as: "if you type empty bucket, then print 'the fire sputters and goes out' and then wait for the next input. Note that before you do this, you would have to check that the player was carrying the bucket, that it was full and that there was a lit fire in the room. You can begin to see why the conditions look daunting!

The format for the entries is (CONDITION) (ACTION) or (IF...) (THEN DO...) There are 256 markers that can be set. These are used for

information that can be in either of two states. For example, a door can be locked or unlocked, a guard can be asleep or awake. Similarly, you can use various counters. You might have ingested poison and must find a cure within 10 moves. When you test your adventure, you can obtain a list of markers and counters, showing their current states, a useful aid to debugging.

Of course, a vital part of any graphic



Inside the mountain it is very gloomy. There is a patch of sunlight to the West and dim tunnels wind away to the South, and to the East.

What now? . . .

adventure creator is ability to draw pictures. Certainly, the examples included in the small sample game are of a very high quality and are drawn very quickly. This knowledge of what can be produced is very reassuring to someone like myself with not an ounce of artistic skill and I found that like the rest of the package, this part of it was very simple to use. Each picture is assigned a number and two pictures can be merged if you run out of memory or want to show a

special effect such as a crystal bridge appearing over the chasm when you wave the wand. Most of the pictures would remain the same and you just need to superimpose the bridge.

You are allowed up to four colours in each picture although you can obtain more by a judicious use of the shade command which produces a stippling effect using one or two ink colours. You can create ellipses and rectangles, draw lines and dots as well as creating mirror images of your picture. Mistakes are easily rectified and you can remove as many of your previous graphic commands as you want. Speed is very important in graphic adventures - there is nothing worse than waiting ages for a picture to draw itself. GAC scores with a very efficient fill routine. Some irregular shapes may need more than one fill command but you are given hints as to how to make the most efficient use of this routine.

I found GAC to be a very simple product to use. You are prompted for most of your inputs and can always return easily to the main menu if you make a mistake. The use of logic takes some getting used to, not because it is very difficult but because there are so many things that you must think about and resist. You can guarantee that you will miss something glaringly obvious. It is also very easy to miss or ignore your own faults, so when you think that you have finished, get several friends to try

your game out for you and have a go at inputting as many dull entries as you can think of in order to see if your game is properly error trapped. My one slight criticism of the product is that the instruction manual could have been better presented but apart from that, I can thoroughly recommend GAC as a useful tool for budding Tolkieners.

The Graphic Adventure Creator is available from Incentive Software Ltd at £2.95 cassette and £7.95 disk.

Club 128

Neil Day with news for Club 128 members.



TRYING TO KEEP YOUR COMMANDER readers up to date with openings and going in the Club 128 part of *Computer* is like trying to take a train on to marble slabs with a chisel. Things move very fast on the electronic networks and it can be a bit hard to keep up. Updated times are often fairly short, and interesting items are added each day. So is this monthly diary you'll find references to directories that should be of long-term interest to Club 128 users, as well as mentioned of a few specific frames that are typical of what you're likely to find. I've asked the authors of the frames to try to extend them to ensure they are still available for Your Commander readers.

GOTOS

A very simple innovation has provided a way to overcome one of the few limitations on *CompuLink*. The tree-like directory structure has always made browsing a rather tedious experience. Each frame displayed on the screen has 10 entries. One of these usually says *****MORE*****. You select *****MORE***** to move to the next "branch" of the directory and then, invariably, have to move further along the structure with yet another *****MORE*****, and yet another, until the last syllable of recorded time, as Shakespeare used to say, but he rarely wasn't using an STL line at 96p per hour!

Thanks to the universal utility of Murphy's law, the recent and most interesting new frames are always at the outer edge of the tree structure, and it is usually simpler to read THE JUNGLE NOW or something new, than to find out about the latest additions (selecting GOTO on the stackbook and typing NEWS will find the latest JUNGLE NOW frame; well worth checking frequently).

However, since the introduction of the GOTOS directory, finding new frames is a breeze. Select GOTO on the stackbook and type GOTOS to get there; then DR a frame for the particular day you're interested in. There is one GOTOS directory for each

Life, the universe and everything



day. So neat and simple it would be surprising if it hadn't been thought of before, and it has ICPUG been using a similar system for some time.

Superbase And Superscript

The difference between those people who write a complex piece of software and the ones who use it is a lot like the difference between biological parents and adoptive ones: all programs bear the stamp of their progenitors, but for good day-to-day goals, you just can't beat the parent! Since the disappearance of Precision Line, the rarely used Precision Software directory, ICPUG has started up an excellent help and advice directory on Superbase (frame 14867). In this directory you'll find users of the popular database program talking with a mixture of affection and aggravation that exactly defines the every tone of

long-suffering parents who would manage to find something pleasing in the latest chaotic massacre perpetrated by their offspring!

If you use the Superbase program you'll find it helpful to check the contents of this directory regularly as a wide range of problems are very speedily answered by a number of users whose pool of experience is impressive.

ICPUG also supports a Communications directory at 14764. Under this, at frame 14763, are listed the Superscript users. For example, there is some useful advice about how to set up Superscript files for input into the Commander Notepad Editor as *CompuLink* frames. If the wonderful text entry on this advice drives you crazy and you have a lot of text to upload, DAVE's advice will be very welcome.

Utilities And Useful Programs

TIC (GOTO TIC) is another good source of useful applications information and utility type programs. For example, at frame 18758 there is a wedge, uploaded by AYG, to enhance Basic with instructions to renumber the lines in programs, delete a range of lines, and many other fancy commands.

Another directory which users should watch for handy utilities and applications advice, is the one organized by the Independent CompuLink Club (GOTO ICC). Users of Triggoli's versatile UPC cartridge should check out PHIL UPC DRB on 18078 uploaded by APD1. From this directory you can download an enhanced version of the Phil's Menu program supplied on disk with the cartridge.

Well, that better be it for this month. If you're not yet a member of *CompuLink* I hope this list of goodies, all available free incidentally, will entice you to join. If you are a *CompuLink* member, and you find something you think might be of interest to a wider audience please send me a courier (F4D1) or info Postnet 45246707.

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SEE US AT THE PCW SHOW ON STAND No. 1721

Game of the Month

Peter Thomas dips into US Gold's Leaderboard and gives it his seal of approval.

I challenge amateur critics who sit at home watching their golfing heroes on television, to go out and buy a copy of *Leaderboard* and discover for themselves the realities of attempting to hit a little white ball into a hole in the grass that seems to get progressively smaller the closer you get to it.

Mind you, any game that can keep editors of computer games magazines amused during the whole of a hot summer afternoon has to be worth more than a second look!

This golfing simulation has one or two long-awaited factors which have been lacking in other games of this type such as Nick Faldo Plays the Open and Golf Connection Set. At last you are given the exact yardage to the hole from all positions of the course, so that your choice of club is much less hit and miss. This enables you to swing at the ball with much more confidence.

Two factors that I feel are missing from this program are that there is no way of saving the game in progress and you cannot obtain a golfing handicap. However the graphics are excellent and the colours have a realistic look. The sound too is a vast improvement on rival games. The rattle of the backswing and the thud as clubhead meets ball are almost as pleasant to the ear as the gentle 'follin' as the ball disappears into the hole.

After entering your name into the frame, you have a choice of four courses. For breakfast you can start with a light romp around number one course, for lunch you can tackle the slightly more difficult second, for afternoon tea the third course becomes a little heavier but the main course is not

easily digestible and I suggest a stiff drink to calm your nerves before taking on this challenge.

The one thing they all have in common is that they are completely surrounded by water. In fact nearly every shot means steering the ball between and over vast expanses of the deep blue sea. As a golfing hacker myself, I was slightly disappointed to find the one of the courses did not resemble a normal golf course and lacked the familiar sights of fairways, trees and bunkers.

There are three levels of play, starting with novice and moving up to amateur and then to professional. As you progress from novice to amateur, the divided hook and slice come into play, and as a professional you have to cope with swirling winds as well.

But before you attempt these heady heights, I suggest that you start at the practice range and tune up your swing and timing. Then you will be ready to take your 14 clubs and tackle one or all four of the courses.

The manual will assist novice golfers in their selection of club as it helpfully gives the min/max yardages achievable with all the different woods and irons. Next you aim the cursor in the direction you wish the ball to go and then strap in, allowing for the strong wind that will blow the ball into the nearest bit of water if you can find it at the earliest opportunity!

I'm sure that all sounds rather simple and I can hear the seasoned golfers exclaim: "Keep your head still, left arm straight, slow backswing, high follow-through, hit through the ball, don't break your wrists too early!" The only

Game of the month



thing I can say with any certainty is that the animated golfer does all these things better than I do.

The little man automatically starts his swing when you press the fire button. However the amount of power in the shot depends on the exact moment you release the button during the backswing. The hook and slice later relies on joystick timing as the clubhead hits the ball. If you are too early (or too early) the ball will shoot off at an alarming angle and disappear into the depths. If you break your wrists too late the ball will go right and you will probably need a pair of trolleys to retrieve it!

Eventually you should reach the putting surface where at least there isn't any water, because, unlike most British courses, it doesn't ever rain in computer golfing games (at least not in any I've seen so far). Reading the slope of the greens comes with practice but you are given help as to the amount of slope and whether you are facing an uphill, downhill or sideways lie. After each hole the Leaderboard records your score and that of your rivals.

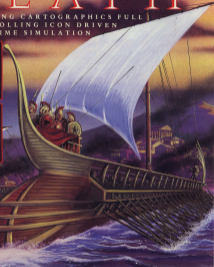
Leaderboard is an interesting variation on the golfing theme and is well worth buying since it can be enjoyed at all levels of play. The standard of the graphics is very realistic which makes it doubly enjoyable and the skill factor means the practice should make locating par an obtainable objective.

Touch Line

US Gold's Units 2/3, Halford Way, Halford, Birmingham B67 7AS. 021 958 3880.

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**Eric Doyle takes a nostalgic
look at the advent of the 64
and speculates on its future.**

In a world that is constantly changing, the longevity of the Commodore 64 reveals the high quality and advanced features which it boasted back in 1982. Band, Jupiter, Aquarius, Interprice, Texas; the list of discontinued lines is a catalogue of disasters. Even Sir Clive's Empire has fallen. Commodore may still be leaping from the C128/Plus 4 era; but the 64 looks as if it will go on for a long time yet, weathering all the storms safe within the shelter of the C128.

As a refugee from the cramped confines of my faithful Vic 20, the wide open spaces of the 64's memory made me feel like a pioneer of the old West. High-tech agoraphobia was offset by the limited RAM for Basic programming but the rudimentary Basic soon drew me into machine code programming. Now I wander about the innards of the 64 as freely as I prowl the rooms of my house.

One of the surprising features of the 64 is the SID chip. The sound capabilities of this phenomenal chunk of technology are still being explored. To date I've heard my own voice synthesized with Andrew's Voice Master, been stunned by Roby Mulholland's innovative music and have recently heard an excellent reproduction of a big band digitized in the States.

The addition of Music Sales' synthesizer has revived my interest in keyboard playing, though Kirk Wickeman's recent demonstrations show that I've still got a lot more to learn!

B·A·C·K
T·O — T·H·E
F·U·T·U·R·E



Basic Problems

The only thing I really detest about the machine is the feeble excuse for a Basic language which resides in the ROM. The advanced sound facilities, sprites and bit-mapped screen file beyond the reach of inexperienced programmers and the number of pages required make machine code a desirable skill to master.

If the apocryphal tales are to be believed, the actual 64 Basic was to be a much more sophisticated implementation but disagreements between the programming team and Commodore resulted in the partial inclusion of the old Vic style ROM. Simons' Basic was an early attempt at providing a better Basic but the cost of the cartridge put most people off. If Commodore had grasped the nettle of bundling software earlier all 64s could have been supplied with a Simon cartridge. The kindest thing I can say about this extended Basic is that it would have been better than nothing.



Although the Basic was initially a curse, its existence has since given rise to a wide variety of extensions. Over the years, culminating in the recent glut of cartridges with on-board resident commands and a variety of alternative languages such as Logo, Pilot, Oxford Pascal, Forth and, more recently, C-Basic.

CP/M was originally planned as an extension and the early review of the machine made much of the forthcoming 288 module. The reality was less exhilarating than the anticipation. The unit eventually heated itself under the scrutiny of the public gaze and failed principally because many of the CP/M programs were designed for an 80 column screen, too wide for the 64.

Mobilisation

Sprites, Movable Object Blocks, fired the imaginations of programmers who had struggled with the laborious movement of characters across the ODC (User Defined Graphics) landscapes of the Vic screen. Sections of the screen which could be moved without affecting the underlying background opened up the possibility of more complex gameplay.

The limitation of eight sprites at one time caused serious flicker effects until programmers mastered interrupt techniques. This took the computer into believing that there are only eight sprites but splits the visible sprites into several smaller screens during the scan. As a viewer of such a game you are unaware that anything unusual is going on but the effects can be staggering.

Such was the impact of the sprite concept that their appearance even benefited Spectrum owners. Routines which produced pseudo sprites were written and this has resulted in the production of the graphically superior

games we see today on all makes of computers.

It's The Biz

The computer market has been in a state of constant flux ever since the appearance of home computers. Back in 1980 a PET machine with a mere 16 or 32K of memory was considered to be a respectable business machine. By 1983, the market had become so sophisticated with the development of Mini machines that the 64 never really caught on in the business sector.

Today the 128 is more suited to business applications but a lot of serious software has been produced for the 64 and much of the current 128 software consists of 80 column conversions of original 64 programs.

The software varies in quality and complexity but the 40 column screen is the real limitation. Many packages employ a scrolling screen which pans sideways as the character count passes 40. Such techniques provide a solution to the column limitation but this means that an overview of the document is difficult and a printout is made.

Viva 64

The 64 has proved to the computer industry that people need compatibility. After several years of buying and building up a software library no-one wants to be faced with substituting a brick by brick when upgrading to a newer model. This is one of the reasons for the Plus 4's failure and the 128's success.

Many fortunes have been made and lost in the 64 market and, though the 64 will not go on forever, it will be around for some time yet.



mucking about!

Eric Doyle leads you through the long and glorious history of C64 games of all types.

ANOTHER VISITOR, STAY AMBIBLE, Stay low-aveit!

When I first heard these words, I knew that *Impossible Mission* was going to be something special. The voice synthesis was not only quite clearly enunciated but also sounded a little like Vincent Price. When the game started properly the animation was cartoon-like.

All this did not disguise the fact that *Impossible Mission* was nothing more than a platform game with the hero leaping from floor to floor collecting pieces of a puzzle. The difference between *Mission* and other games available at that time was that it set higher standards of technical wizardry and the basic gameplay was placed into a new context.

In most platform games, and this is as true today as it was then, the aim was just to collect "treasure" and nothing more. The treasure puzzle in *Mission* was used to create a further dimension to the

game by acting as a key to the eventual secrets of the player.

Although it is refreshing to see ingenuity at work, it would be too-much to expect every game to display the same degree of original thinking, but to be a blockbuster a game definitely needs something extra. This can be excellent graphics, sound as it might merely be a gimmick. It's nice if the game is competitive or additive, as well!

Games don't have to be complex to be addictive. *Hexxon* has had no small amount of success with *Chillies*. The most striking feature of this game is the use of colour giving the graphics a plausible 3D look. Apart from that it is just a good old fashioned shoot down the alien ship type of game. A chance element is brought in where you can gamble against the computer to gain a higher bonus which does add extra excitement to the proceedings.

Shoot-em-ups and platform games, in one form or another, dominated the early market. Who can forget *Doomay Kong*, *Mama Minter* and all of the derivatives? But players of *Pac-Man* would hardly recognise this as a basic for the multitude of mazes which have enjoyed popularity lately.

Into The Labyrinth

Platform games and mazes are very similar. In each a fixed path has to be followed and treasures collected. This has given rise to the maze adventure where certain objects have to be collected to help you to proceed towards the game's end. Only a few objects can be carried at a time and some are useful while others are harmful or serve no purpose at all.

Microbial specialised in this type of game with the *Cursebert* series and *Levels of Fear*. These days every company seems to have a maze. Virgin has *Inventory* and *Singus*, Blackbyte did very nicely for *Ultimate*, *Space Doubt* from CRI, the excellent *Castleton & Horn Palace* byware and *Frankie Goes to Hollywood* by Ocean.

All of these games owe allegiance to the numerous adventure games which have been popular since the early days of main frame computers. An adventure is a mind game, a series of puzzles which you must solve by interacting with the program's database of locations and objects.

Interrogations take place through textual input. At first only two word



commands could be accepted: Go north, take object, examine object. Ever since English was first used in Melbourne House's *Hobbit*, the world of adventure has changed. Graphical representations were first put to good effect in the *Hobbit* to supplement the verbal descriptions of locations, though they are not the first. Sierra On-Line, based in the States, used graphics in adventures before the 64 was even dreamed of and collectible items often used to appear and disappear in the graphics as they were dropped or collected.

For their dexterity and difficulty, any look at adventures would not be able to avoid *Level 9* which specializes in this genre. The list of successes seem endless: *Worm in Paradise*, *Red Moon*, *Dungeon Adventure*, *Dave's All Time* and many more.

Though *Level 9* takes the British laurels for the best adventures, it is *Infocom's* range most be lauded worldwide. The *Zork* trilogy gets higher as you progress through the series, but for me the best adventure award would go to *Archon*—*Archon to the Galaxy*. This title *Infocom* follows the same approach which made the radio series so successful. The problems are so complex and hilariously funny that it challenges even the most experienced adventures.

World War are not the same thing to a computer. *Amnig's* game relied on your partner verifying your answer and a better solution to the problem.

By far the best Trivia style game is *Powerplay* from Arkane because it keeps the original idea of inconsequential general knowledge questions but gives multi-choice answers selected by joystick, a board 'game within the game' where you challenge your partner to a quick response question and answer session, and the chance to create your own question base. The board game is played on a perspective board in an Ancient Greek setting where you increase the power of your playing pieces by correct answers and try to challenge and overcome your enemy in a Chess/Arkan-like combat.

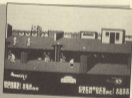
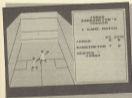
Most boardgame conversions do allow you to select the computer as an opponent which is handy if you don't know anyone else who likes to play. The oldest of these is Chess and much debate rages about which is the best. The two main contenders are *Artlogic's* *Grandmaster* and *Colossal Chess* by CDS. Both companies would argue strongly that their game is the most challenging, but in my opinion the 3D facility of *Colossal* just gives it the edge.

Biggles Flies Down

Film titles have also been attempted but with less success. *Artlogic's* *Ghostbusters* proved to be an enormous seller but for me it was an excellent example of the emperor's new clothes. The digitized voice was amazing, the programming was clever and the reviewers acclaimed it as a game of great merit. The hype was immense but the gameplay was dull and repetitive.

'You've seen the film, read the book, now play the game' is the sort of hype which fills me with dread. A film is a film, *Friday the 13th* and the *Thriller* back to the future were all strange board to the storyline of the film as without success they depended. It took Microsoft to prove that games of the film can be created successfully with the interpretation of *Biggles*.

Biggles is really four games in one. The three linked games on the first side of the tape switch about fairly randomly, but completion of them all gives you a far better chance to complete side two. The pleasant part of all this is that, though side one is principally a collection of shoot-em-up games, side two is a very simple flight simulator but has an arcade adventure element. A wide variety of entertaining and



Board Meetings

Boardgames are a popular source of inspiration for software artists. Chess, Monopoly, Scrabble and Trivial Pursuits have all been successfully translated to the 64.

I have mixed feelings on some of the Trivia games because they offer so real alternative to the board game. US Gold tried to computerize the game with *Monster Trivia* but somewhere along the line no-one thought to Anglicize the questions. *Amnig* had a go with *Trivia*, a game based heavily on the original and with a database generator to allow your own questions to be added. Unfortunately the input of answers in both cases has problems. In *Monster Trivia* your spelling and syntax must be correct. *World War Two* and the *Second*

Unquestionably, *Infocom* (now allied to the Virgin Games empire) has the best range of board games with *Archon*, *Monopoly* and *Cluedo*. The accuracy of these games is guaranteed because they are licensed by the original manufacturers.

Card games have been less successful despite several attempts to spice them up. The best and lowest example is *Samsara's* *Five - Strip Poker* in which clothes are not the only thing that's been ripped off.

Big names sell games could be the current motto of a large section of the software industry. *Brian Jack's* *Super Challenge*, *Garry Thompson's* *Darkness*, *Steve Davis* *Snooker*, *Richard Rat*, *Supergun*, *Winder* are all names given to add extra charisma to the games.

challenging games with a storyline which sticks to the plot.

The inclusion of the simulator was a calculated risk after the success of *Artlogic's* *Skylark*. Much more complex flight simulators abound. If you want to fly a Harrier see *Amnig*, *Microsoft* has a Spitfire or two in their *League*, *Artlogic* allows you to try the *Space Shuttle* but by far the most popular subject for simulators is the T4. One of the most complex is that of *Doc Bell* which would provide a challenge to a professional pilot.

As a flight trainer, *Solo Flight* from US Gold is unbeatable. Many years ago I saw a version of this imported from American publisher Micropross. It cost a fortune and did not have the excellent voice simulation training facilities of the latest update. For anyone wishing to try



their hand at flying from airport to airport they could do a lot worse than this.

If battles in the air are more your forte, ACE will give you plenty to think about. 'Carcade's' heavily publicised game is one of my favourite pastimes. Flying a jet in search of your prey brings all of the realism of modern aerial dogfights into your living room.

To Boldly Go...

The most well known flying bits are those which take place in deep space. Star Trek was the first computer game that I ever heard of and variants have appeared at regular intervals.

Demon's Commodore Matt II is probably the best available which still retains the true essence of the original game. The aliens are invading and your mission is to clean up the galaxy sector by sector to make the universe a safe place to live in.

Manipulation of maps, manpower and machine is the key. Search out and destroy the enemy ships around a giddied area of space. When each enemy squadron is located the screen is switched from the usual repair and reconnaissance screens to a battle screen in which the enemy ships screen in to the attack.

This idea was taken to its limit by Hiredid with Dina. A cargo ship in deep space is under control and must be taken from planet to planet to trade in goods both legal and contraband. The profits from successful missions can be spent on more advanced weaponry for your ship to protect it from pirate craft who patrol around the space stations like jacksals waiting for a kill.

The most striking part of the game is the use of 3D wire-frame graphics which give a real sense of depth to the screen. I admit that the original BBC version has more of a fast arcade feeling about it but on the C64 there is more realism and a few more problems to contend with.

Another approach to the subject came with the PS-1 Trading Company where part of your mission is to select a crew. Candidates appear with their curriculum vitae and each one must be considered for a particular role on the ship. The sense of realism becomes apparent when battle commences. Some of your crew will panic, some go nobly to their deaths, but most will hopefully function even more efficiently under stress.

PS-1 is a game of total absorption and one of the closest games to my impression of life amongst the stars, a feeling which is enhanced by the excellent graphics.

For sheer programming skill Addison's Cosmos II is worth seeing. It is a planetbound action game based around an interplanetary scrap metal company. Find and cannibalise wrecked ships under enemy fire to improve your chances of survival.

The planet surface generation employs advanced fractal graphics which create a 'real' terrain to roam about on as you try to locate the tangled remains of unsuccessful pioneers' spaceships.

This Sporting Life

Simulations of sport may seem like an odd concept. Many people write them off because of the contradiction

between being out there playing the game and being an onlooker in front of a TV screen. They are missing the point, the games should not be seen in the same light.

The first sport simulation that I bought for my C64 was Commodore's own International Soccer cartridge, probably the best game in the catalogue. In those days a two player game was a bit of a novelty and we still see it in the office for the occasional league championship.

Field sports probably account for more broken joysticks than any other game but US Gold's Summer and Winter Games collection are a little less frantic but much more enjoyable and skillful than many of its competitors. The graphics are superb and the only bad thing I can say is that the British National Anthem is painful to listen to.

Whatever your sport there is something available. There's Squash, Basketball, Baseball, American Football, Soccer, Boxing, Cricket, Football and Darts with additive abilities like Billiards and Rollerball alongside all of the Island Am's game.

I've got to see Polo and Water Skiing simulations but I'm sure it's just a matter of time.

The current emphasis seems to be on Golf simulations. The best in the field being Aristocrat's Golf Construct for Ser and US Gold's Leaderboard. The two games are quite different though similar in appearance. Construction Ser has more technical considerations and the ability to design, or at least load, many different courses. Leaderboard has much more of an arcade feel.

Games have come and gone over the past three years and it would take several volumes of four Commodores to do justice to the range of games for the 64. The market is maturing, but what is maturing into?

Future Markets

Although the games market still accounts for the largest part of the industry the competition has heated up lately with the appearance of budget programs. Many of these are golden color re-releases but there is a rising tide of new cheap label programs. Massmartic has been alone in exploiting this area for quite some time now. Whether this and will be good for the market on such a large scale is debatable. The rewards are small for the programmer compared to the fast forwards of the early days. The impetus to spend time producing large, complex games will be lowered on a simple equation of rewards against development time.

The other side of the coin is that a new attitude will accommodate the changing market and it will once again parallel the pop music industry where budget and full price products exist happily side by side.

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VC 11

DOWN TO BUSINESS

Eric Doyle looks at the C64's potential as a small business machine.

AS A POTENTIAL BUSINESS MACHINE the C64 is fading fast in the face of the competition from its big sister the IBM. This does not mean it has no purpose in business but it does highlight the advantage of an 80 column screen over the 64's 40 columns.

Generally speaking Business software can be broken down into three main categories: wordprocessors, databases and spreadsheets. Of these by far the most competitive area is in wordprocessing.

Not all businesses will benefit from computerisation because they can often demand more time than standard manual systems, especially if a database is to be utilised. Another consideration is your accountants. After all, it is he who must sort out the information from the reams of printed paper which the end of the year will generate. A spreadsheet is a very versatile and powerful tool but in the wrong hands it can be more of a curse than a blessing.

Wordprocessing

To be classified as a wordprocessor a program need do no more than to run your computer into a typewriter, in fact the following program could be all you need if you only need to print the occasional memo:

```
10 OPEN 4,7:AO="" :CHR$(14)
20 GET AB:IF AB="" THEN 30
30 PRINT A$:IF A$(CHR$(26)) THEN
80:GOTO 10:PRINT "1"
40:80-85-A:IF A$(CHR$(15)) THEN
PRINT "45-85"
50 GOTO 30
```

Such a simple program has many disadvantages for serious business applications. The width of the text is fixed to the width set on the printer, paragraph lengths must be less than 255 characters and words which are too long to squeeze on to the end of a line will be split in an arbitrary manner.

The professional user will meet circumstances where the document width varies, they may prefer right

justified alignment like the columns of this article and repeated page headers, footers and numbering may be required.

As someone whose livelihood depends on the printed word, my own requirements stretch to word counts and character counts to make sure my copy will fit into the space allotted by the editor, being liable, I occasionally spell words incorrectly so a spelling checker is required and I sometimes want to search through my text for a particular word or phrase which I wish to change to a 'search and replace' function is essential.

A good general purpose wordprocessor is Speedwriter from JCL Software. It lacks a spelling checker, a wordcount and has only rudimentary printer controls. It does have all of the other features and the manual is clear and neatly assembled. Tascend III and SuperSoft's WordPerfect are also worthy of consideration.

For most business users the enhanced printing facilities of an laser or dot matrix may be desirable. In this case one of the more expensive wordprocessors will be needed. The two main contenders are Ariolasoft's Page Clip and Freedom Software's Superwrite. Both offer a full range of advanced facilities including spell checking, special printer commands and 'mail merge'.

Mail merge is particularly useful for mailing purposes. We've all seen the personalised letters which make comments such as, "the prize car will be delivered to the Smith household at 22 'Yearnest, Tootstown". Every letter has the name and address of the recipient in the relevant place. To do this a list of names and addresses is stored on a database and a general letter is written on the wordps. Instead of an actual name and address, the letter contains a coded symbol which sets the printer to search the database for the next name and address and insert it in the text. In this way several hundred personalised letters can be printed out with each recipient's name inserted correctly.

As a guide to prospective buyers I would suggest that you go for the most complex wordprocessor that you can afford, ensuring that the manual is comprehensive and comprehensible. Although you won't use all of the functions all of the time you will bless

the wisdom of your decision as your business needs expand. The home user probably won't need to use a wordps very often but it's handy for creating party invites, jumble sale advices like as well as storing off used documents such as curriculum vitae for job applications. In this case your needs will be modest so go for the cheaper end of the market armed with the knowledge that there are plenty of sharks in this range.

Databases

Databases are filing systems which can use the special facilities of a computer to create a cross-referencing system which would be impossible with a standard filing cabinet.

Many databases are available but care must be taken in making a selection. I was using First Publishing's AirBASE for a demonstration recently. I chose it because it is easy to understand and simple to set up. During the demo I accidentally hit the wrong key, the program crashed and I lost some of the information which I had entered. This was no major disaster but it did not impress my audience when I had to reload the program all over again. "Time is money in my business, I wouldn't want that to happen to you often," remarked one of the observers.

I will use the program for my demonstrations because in many ways it's excellent for modest applications and it's disk based. Disks are essential to make a database work efficiently otherwise you are limited to the computer's primary disc to store all of the entries. This is alright for home use but for business it would be a real disaster. If each file is just 256 characters long you'd be lucky to get more than 100 entries which could be manipulated at one time and each time you add to or update your file it means reentering the whole file at the end of each session. If the computer locks up you'd have to reenter the whole series of corrections and alterations again.

Before considering disk systems let's look at a tape system from Dutch based company Radarsoft distributed by Antares in this country. Database is data processing at its simplest level. The first requirement is an input sheet

(template) which has all of the categories of information printed on it and you go to put in the specific details for each file entry.

The Database program has two ready-made templates, one for an address file and the other is a catalogue for your record collection. There is also the facility to create your own template.

Each unit of a database is known as a record and each entry in the record is known as a field. Database allows you to select particular fields and a range of records for sorting into alphabetical or numerical order and for handcopying on your printer.

The system limits you to 36,000 characters with a maximum record length of 260 characters. For a system which fully utilizes the maximum record allowance, the file would only allow 144 records. Great for home use but seriously limited for even the smallest business.

Disk systems use memory very sparingly, normally only having one record in memory at a time. Each record has an allotted space on the disk and this is the same number of characters for each record.

When designing a template you are required to specify a length for each field. This is the maximum number of characters which will fit. For example, if you design a field for Surname it has to be long enough for any surname you are likely to encounter but short enough to save on disk space. A field length of ten characters would be fine if you only know people called Smith, Jones or Williams but if a Hillwalkers turns up you'll have to redesign the whole record template to accommodate them. This could mean re-writing all of the existing entries on to the new template, a daunting task as your file grows.

If a field is larger than the entered information the computer generates padding characters which will not show up on the screen but increase the entry to a standard length for storage. In this way all of the entries on the disk are the same length and a redundant record can be replaced by a new one without fear of overwriting another viable entry.

The most powerful database on the market is Precision Software's Superbase. The facilities make the manual a daunting prospect. In anticipation of this the package contains an entire cassette manual which will at least make 80% of users proficient enough to utilize their own database needs. Advanced requirements are catered for in the manual and for those who still have trouble there is a very useful supplementary book on advanced techniques available from the manufacturers.

Using the sort and search facilities in this program you can specify several parameters. For instance, if you want to find all Commodore 64 owners named John, with blue eyes and living in Newcastle, you can do it assuming you base his fields for such information.

When printing out information you don't always need all of the record information printed out and often the order on the template will be wrong. This necessitates the creation of a report card template which uses specified information from the standard record set and prints it out in the given manner.

Spreadsheets

For home use, spreadsheets and similar account programs are not usually necessary. Many home accounts programs have been published but for the majority of people a record of the year's spending is not required. On a monthly basis, the fluctuations in incomes and outgoings can be better dealt with using jet and paper and probably in less time than it takes to load the program.

A spreadsheet is a matrix of boxes. Nothing more, nothing less. What makes it so special is that the user can define the number and contents of each box.

The boxes are known as cells and after divided the dimensions of the spreadsheet you can then define the size and contents of each cell. A cell can contain one of four types of information: descriptive text, a blank space, a numerical value or a formula.

Descriptive text is used for columns or row labels to clarify the purpose for that series of cells. The computer does not need labels but you and your accountant will.

Fixed sums are entered as numerical values. An example would be a list of unit costs and quantities on an invoice spreadsheet. Each line is located by a general labelling system which often takes the form of letters across the sheet and numbers down the sheet. Locating a particular cell requires the input of the two co-ordinates such as C5 or D8. If a sheet has more than 26 characters wide then double letter labelling is used e.g. AA,BB,CC etc. or AA,AB,AC...AZ,BA, BB,BC etc.

To save time and utilize the computer to best advantage, cells can be controlled by formulas. In our example of an invoice, placing a value in the quantity column and a fixed value in the unit cost column could automatically generate a total for each entry on the invoice and update the grand total and VAT section at the bottom of the invoice sheet.

The problem with a spreadsheet is that the sheet size of the matrix will not fit on the screen and a method of window scrolling has been devised to partially overcome this problem. This works well when typing in cell contents but when an ledger spread you will want to compare two entries which are at opposite ends of the sheet. One solution is to printout the sheet but this is time consuming so most sheets allow split screen viewing. In such a situation you can specify that certain cells will appear on one half of the screen and a

separate distant set of cells will appear in the other half. Often this facility is further enhanced by allowing the two screens to be scrolled separately.

Printouts are another headache for the spreadsheet programmer and two principal variations have been formulated, horizontal or vertical printing.

In horizontal printing the first 80 columns of the spreadsheet are printed across the paper and the full length of the sheet is printed down the paper. The printer then prints the next 80 columns under this and so on until all of the columns have been printed. The next job for the user is to set up with sticky tape and construct the full sheet from the 80 column sections.

Vertical printing is similar to horizontal but the first column is printed at a 90 degree rotation and it is the last 80 rows which appear across the top of the page until the last column is printed and then the next 80 rows are printed.

A further use of the spreadsheet is especially useful as the business changes in size. Because the columns can affect one another it is possible to artificially alter entries to see what the net effect will be.

If you decide that a higher grade raw material will improve your product sales over a period of time, you can put in the new cost and immediately see the effect on your profit margin. Estimating the effect your improved product will have on overall sales will allow you to see how soon the business will recover, a useful demonstration when persuading your bank manager to make the necessary funds available.

Although I have said that the 84 is limited to 40 columns, there is a way around this. A Ricoh'soft is marketing Batteries included 84-80 adaptor which interfaces an 80-column screen chip in place of the VIC II. Paperclip, Cal-Xit and Consultants are all available on the standard disk alongside the 40 column versions.

Touchline

ICI Software: 47 London Road, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN20 6PS. 0892 27454.

Taman: Springfield House, Hyde Terrace, Leeds LS2 9LN. 0532 458001.

Supersoft: Winchester House, Cornhill Road, Westlands, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 7SL. 01 861 1166.

Artisansoft: 68 Long Arch, Coombe Garden, London WC2E 9BT.

Precision Software: 6 Park Terrace, Worcester Park, Surrey KT4 7JQ. 01 880 7766.

First Publishing: Unit 208, Hornsford Road, Hornsford Park, Pangbourne, Berks. 07537 5264.

UTILITY FURNITURE

Eric Doyle cuts his way through the jungle of cartridges now available for the C64.

CAR OWNERS HAVE BEEN CUSTOMIZING their vehicles for years. Modifications range from mere decoration to the purely practical and, although furry dice and go-faster stripes have yet to appear, there is a wide trend in the computing world. Utilities of all kinds abound and the current trend seems to be more towards cartridges than either disk or cassette.

Cartridges are the most efficient way to store programs and can achieve downloading rates that any other storage medium. Why is it that this market has only recently blossomed?

Up to the beginning of last year the majority of cartridges available were Commodore's own, most of which were less than average games. Companies such as Supersoft had pioneered the field of utility programs with monitors and tools, but it is fair to say that these weren't as freely available as the range of disk and cassette utilities.

Today there are several companies producing cartridges and most of them have Dutch connections. The widest range belongs to Robotek but there are also Eastman Micro Centre's Home Files, the Power Cartridge from ECS, Home and Personal Computers' final Cartridge, and the Expert System from Trilogic. Most carry machine code monitors on board, have some form of disk turbo and a reset switch.

The Robotek 50 cartridge has a Basic tacker which adds useful keywords such as RINLMBR to open out line numbering intervals and AUTO to generate line numbers with equal spacing. The machine code monitor occupies free RAM at 40632 but it can be relocated in any part of memory.

By far the most interesting aspects of the unit are the turbo facilities. Alongside a special tape turbo is a head alignment facility to make sure that the

tape recorder is set up correctly. Of course, only Robotek turbo saved programs will turbo load because commercial cassettes carry their own unique turbo systems. This is not true of the turbo disk system which improves the speed of any normally speed disk tacked.

The main problem with the Robotek system is that they currently use computer RAM and many programs will overwrite the cartridge loaded operating system and cause a crash.

The Land Of OS

The new generation of cartridges are universal phantoms of the Operating System. Using just a handful of bytes as a toe-hold in the host computer they exist in symbolic harmony to the user's benefit. It is interesting to ponder that the reason for this development has its roots in piracy.

The development of the British market has always relied heavily on cassette based software. I was fortunate enough to have a disk drive in the early days and slow loading cassette games were frustrating to use, rather like having to ride your bike everywhere because there's no petrol for your sports car. Like many other people, I spent my first loading days transferring the tape programs on to disk. The arrival of turbo tapes was initially a relief and in some cases these loaded faster than disk. Some turbo disk systems were developed and I was thrown back into my search for transfer programs.

Now the main function of the cartridges is to create backup copies of cassettes on to disk. This has created a major controversy in the industry because there is nothing to stop unscrupulous people from making illegal copies for their friends, just as home taping is killing the pop industry, so backup piracy injures the computer trade. Douglas and other software protection systems have been used but this increases the cost of programs and any commonly adopted system would soon lead to a black market counter measure. Optical systems like Leveltek are good ideas but render many programs useless to me because of my large screen monitor.

Various pressure groups have been formed to suppress piracy but to no avail. The solution lies with the development of safeguards within the computer itself.

Beating Basic

Basic is a convenient language to put your computer through its paces but it is also a very inefficient system. Most programmers would like to use machine code but few can spare the time. The slowness of Basic can be overcome by converting the code using a compiler.

A program is stored in memory as new Basic code. When the program runs, this code is interpreted word by word as a jump table to various routines which handle the variables declared by the program. Basic is therefore known as an interpretive language.

A compiled program is faster because the interpretation stage is performed when the program has been written and debugged and the converted program is saved.

Compilers, such as Basic-4 from Fine Software and Bitor from Supersoft, are disk based and often take a while to actually convert a program. Patience is rewarded with a program which will run extremely quickly and often occupies less space in memory. Both systems will operate with most Basic extensions but these must be resident in the machine when the program is used.

Basic-41 just has the edge because it will accept positively dimensioned arrays but Bitor won't. Program dependent arrays dimensioned by a variable will not be accepted by either, eg. DIM A(X).

If you decide to try machine code, an assembler is essential. Although many assemblers are available in most cartridges they are not as flexible as a double pass assembler such as Laser Genesis from Ocean.

True assemblers allow you to write your program using numbered lines as in Basic. Instead of the usual Basic commands each line has one mnemonic machine code command and lines can be inserted or deleted as the program develops.

Laser Genesis allows you to use labels for jumps within a program. This means that instead of calculating the value for

LANGUAGE

C

David Janda does his white coat to examine the anatomy of C.

IN THIS ARTICLE, I INTEND TO TAKE A look at the structure of a C program, together with an overview of the basics necessary in understanding C.

Data Types

C has a variety of data types. When a constant is declared, the micro can usually tell what type the variable should take by simply looking at the data that will initialize it. But what if the value is to change? The compiler needs to know what type of data is going to be held in a particular variable, and that is why declaring variables is very important.

There are seven basic types in standard C:

```
int
long
short
unsigned
char
float
double
```

In standard C — int, long, short and unsigned would be data types that are used to represent integers — whole numbers. int is usually assigned with the standard word size of the micro. A short integer can be no longer than int and long is smaller than int.

However, actually implementing all these different types on a small version of C can be impractical, and often, one type can store the same value as another. The C Power package

included in Your Commodore (July 1988) makes no distinction between int, long and short; they are treated by the compiler as being the same. In the case of C Power, int, long and short are two bytes (16 bits) to represent numbers, so the range of the integers for these types can represent is from -32768 to +32767. Actually declaring the variables is simple enough, just specify the type followed by the name of the variable:

```
int age;
long count;
short box;
int a, b, c;
```

As you can see, more than one variable can be declared on the same line.

A variation of integer variables is the unsigned integer. An unsigned integer must not be less than zero. It normally occupies the same space in memory (in C Power this is true) and thus can be larger than a signed integer. Declaring an unsigned integer is done as follows:

```
unsigned int box;
```

The char type is in fact an unsigned integer in the range of zero to 255. The computer translates a number to a corresponding character. Declaring char variables is done as follows:

```
char initial;
char first, second, last;
char letter = 'A';
```

Float and double are types used to represent numbers with a fractional part. In standard C, double can store a number greater than float, but in C Power they are treated the same. Declaring floating point variables is done like this:

```
float pi;
float part = 98.343
```

Constants can be defined in each type:

```
whole = 1234;
letter = 'B';
loop = '000';
length = 1.04115;
```

It's important to note that in the example the characters '000' were NOT assigned to loop. There are characters in the ASCII/CBIJI codes which cannot be displayed. C allows a character to be represented as long as it is preceded by the backslash character. Another method is to use escape sequences:

```
/* — newline
/* — tab
/* — backspace
/* — carriage return
/* — form feed
/* — backslash
/* — single quote
/* — double quote
```

As an example, consider this line of C:

```
print 8("This line\nis split");
```

This would be printed as:

```
This line
is split
```

Why? Because the escape sequence \n would print a new line. This type of feature is very useful in C Power, as it enables control codes (such as those for colour) to be embedded in text.

String handling is also covered for in C. However, unlike Basic, a C string cannot be dynamically created. It must be declared like all other C variables. Further more, you cannot declare strings like this:

```
char name = "Your Commodore";
```

Consider this example:

```
main {
/* A single C example */
char name(10);
```


Eric Doyle tells you

which chips do what.

LOOK INSIDE A COMPUTER and what do you see? Lots and lots of chips. What are they doing there?

It is tempting to visualize a computer's memory as a massive slab of terracotta covered in thousands of regular depressions which hold numerical values. For the user this image may be very useful but to the designer nothing could be further from the truth. The architecture is as complex as any gothic cathedral and yet, in a similar way, the many small parts are united by a poetic, logical oneness.

Although I will be looking at the C64 in detail, the principles are true for all computers, whether made by Commodore or not. The architecture of a computer can be broken down into several main areas: RAM, Basic interpreter, input/output routines (kernel), character pattern information and video/audio/peripheral communication channels.

RAM (KB)

00	ROMA, ROM
01	ROM 256 B
02	ROMA
03	ROM 512 B
04	RAM
05	RAM 1024
06	RAM 2048
07	RAM 3072
08	RAM 4096
09	RAM 5120
10	RAM 6144
11	RAM 7168
12	RAM 8192
13	RAM 9216
14	RAM 10240
15	RAM 11264
16	RAM 12288
17	RAM 13312
18	RAM 14336
19	RAM 15360
20	RAM 16384
21	RAM 17408
22	RAM 18432
23	RAM 19456
24	RAM 20480
25	RAM 21504
26	RAM 22528
27	RAM 23552
28	RAM 24576
29	RAM 25600
30	RAM 26624
31	RAM 27648
32	RAM 28672
33	RAM 29696
34	RAM 30720
35	RAM 31744
36	RAM 32768
37	RAM 33792
38	RAM 34816
39	RAM 35840
40	RAM 36864
41	RAM 37888
42	RAM 38912
43	RAM 39936
44	RAM 40960
45	RAM 41984
46	RAM 43008
47	RAM 44032
48	RAM 45056
49	RAM 46080
50	RAM 47104
51	RAM 48128
52	RAM 49152
53	RAM 50176
54	RAM 51200
55	RAM 52224
56	RAM 53248
57	RAM 54272
58	RAM 55296
59	RAM 56320
60	RAM 57344
61	RAM 58368
62	RAM 59392
63	RAM 60416
64	RAM 61440
65	RAM 62464
66	RAM 63488
67	RAM 64512
68	RAM 65536
69	RAM 66560
70	RAM 67584
71	RAM 68608
72	RAM 69632
73	RAM 70656
74	RAM 71680
75	RAM 72704
76	RAM 73728
77	RAM 74752
78	RAM 75776
79	RAM 76800
80	RAM 77824
81	RAM 78848
82	RAM 79872
83	RAM 80896
84	RAM 81920
85	RAM 82944
86	RAM 83968
87	RAM 84992
88	RAM 86016
89	RAM 87040
90	RAM 88064
91	RAM 89088
92	RAM 90112
93	RAM 91136
94	RAM 92160
95	RAM 93184
96	RAM 94208
97	RAM 95232
98	RAM 96256
99	RAM 97280
100	RAM 98304
101	RAM 99328
102	RAM 100352
103	RAM 101376
104	RAM 102400
105	RAM 103424
106	RAM 104448
107	RAM 105472
108	RAM 106496
109	RAM 107520
110	RAM 108544
111	RAM 109568
112	RAM 110592
113	RAM 111616
114	RAM 112640
115	RAM 113664
116	RAM 114688
117	RAM 115712
118	RAM 116736
119	RAM 117760
120	RAM 118784
121	RAM 119808
122	RAM 120832
123	RAM 121856
124	RAM 122880
125	RAM 123904
126	RAM 124928
127	RAM 125952
128	RAM 126976
129	RAM 128000
130	RAM 129024
131	RAM 130048
132	RAM 131072
133	RAM 132096
134	RAM 133120
135	RAM 134144
136	RAM 135168
137	RAM 136192
138	RAM 137216
139	RAM 138240
140	RAM 139264
141	RAM 140288
142	RAM 141312
143	RAM 142336
144	RAM 143360
145	RAM 144384
146	RAM 145408
147	RAM 146432
148	RAM 147456
149	RAM 148480
150	RAM 149504
151	RAM 150528
152	RAM 151552
153	RAM 152576
154	RAM 153600
155	RAM 154624
156	RAM 155648
157	RAM 156672
158	RAM 157696
159	RAM 158720
160	RAM 159744
161	RAM 160768
162	RAM 161792
163	RAM 162816
164	RAM 163840
165	RAM 164864
166	RAM 165888
167	RAM 166912
168	RAM 167936
169	RAM 168960
170	RAM 169984
171	RAM 171008
172	RAM 172032
173	RAM 173056
174	RAM 174080
175	RAM 175104
176	RAM 176128
177	RAM 177152
178	RAM 178176
179	RAM 179200
180	RAM 180224
181	RAM 181248
182	RAM 182272
183	RAM 183296
184	RAM 184320
185	RAM 185344
186	RAM 186368
187	RAM 187392
188	RAM 188416
189	RAM 189440
190	RAM 190464
191	RAM 191488
192	RAM 192512
193	RAM 193536
194	RAM 194560
195	RAM 195584
196	RAM 196608
197	RAM 197632
198	RAM 198656
199	RAM 199680
200	RAM 200704
201	RAM 201728
202	RAM 202752
203	RAM 203776
204	RAM 204800
205	RAM 205824
206	RAM 206848
207	RAM 207872
208	RAM 208896
209	RAM 209920
210	RAM 210944
211	RAM 211968
212	RAM 212992
213	RAM 214016
214	RAM 215040
215	RAM 216064
216	RAM 217088
217	RAM 218112
218	RAM 219136
219	RAM 220160
220	RAM 221184
221	RAM 222208
222	RAM 223232
223	RAM 224256
224	RAM 225280
225	RAM 226304
226	RAM 227328
227	RAM 228352
228	RAM 229376
229	RAM 230400
230	RAM 231424
231	RAM 232448
232	RAM 233472
233	RAM 234496
234	RAM 235520
235	RAM 236544
236	RAM 237568
237	RAM 238592
238	RAM 239616
239	RAM 240640
240	RAM 241664
241	RAM 242688
242	RAM 243712
243	RAM 244736
244	RAM 245760
245	RAM 246784
246	RAM 247808
247	RAM 248832
248	RAM 249856
249	RAM 250880
250	RAM 251904
251	RAM 252928
252	RAM 253952
253	RAM 254976
254	RAM 256000
255	RAM 257024
256	RAM 258048
257	RAM 259072
258	RAM 260096
259	RAM 261120
260	RAM 262144
261	RAM 263168
262	RAM 264192
263	RAM 265216
264	RAM 266240
265	RAM 267264
266	RAM 268288
267	RAM 269312
268	RAM 270336
269	RAM 271360
270	RAM 272384
271	RAM 273408
272	RAM 274432
273	RAM 275456
274	RAM 276480
275	RAM 277504
276	RAM 278528
277	RAM 279552
278	RAM 280576
279	RAM 281600
280	RAM 282624
281	RAM 283648
282	RAM 284672
283	RAM 285696
284	RAM 286720
285	RAM 287744
286	RAM 288768
287	RAM 289792
288	RAM 290816
289	RAM 291840
290	RAM 292864
291	RAM 293888
292	RAM 294912
293	RAM 295936
294	RAM 296960
295	RAM 297984
296	RAM 299008
297	RAM 300032
298	RAM 301056
299	RAM 302080
300	RAM 303104
301	RAM 304128
302	RAM 305152
303	RAM 306176
304	RAM 307200
305	RAM 308224
306	RAM 309248
307	RAM 310272
308	RAM 311296
309	RAM 312320
310	RAM 313344
311	RAM 314368
312	RAM 315392
313	RAM 316416
314	RAM 317440
315	RAM 318464
316	RAM 319488
317	RAM 320512
318	RAM 321536
319	RAM 322560
320	RAM 323584
321	RAM 324608
322	RAM 325632
323	RAM 326656
324	RAM 327680
325	RAM 328704
326	RAM 329728
327	RAM 330752
328	RAM 331776
329	RAM 332800
330	RAM 333824
331	RAM 334848
332	RAM 335872
333	RAM 336896
334	RAM 337920
335	RAM 338944
336	RAM 339968
337	RAM 340992
338	RAM 342016
339	RAM 343040
340	RAM 344064
341	RAM 345088
342	RAM 346112
343	RAM 347136
344	RAM 348160
345	RAM 349184
346	RAM 350208
347	RAM 351232
348	RAM 352256
349	RAM 353280
350	RAM 354304
351	RAM 355328
352	RAM 356352
353	RAM 357376
354	RAM 358400
355	RAM 359424
356	RAM 360448
357	RAM 361472
358	RAM 362496
359	RAM 363520
360	RAM 364544
361	RAM 365568
362	RAM 366592
363	RAM 367616
364	RAM 368640
365	RAM 369664
366	RAM 370688
367	RAM 371712
368	RAM 372736
369	RAM 373760
370	RAM 374784
371	RAM 375808
372	RAM 376832
373	RAM 377856
374	RAM 378880
375	RAM 379904
376	RAM 380928
377	RAM 381952
378	RAM 382976
379	RAM 384000
380	RAM 385024
381	RAM 386048
382	RAM 387072
383	RAM 388096
384	RAM 389120
385	RAM 390144
386	RAM 391168
387	RAM 392192
388	RAM 393216
389	RAM 394240
390	RAM 395264
391	RAM 396288
392	RAM 397312
393	RAM 398336
394	RAM 399360
395	RAM 400384
396	RAM 401408
397	RAM 402432
398	RAM 403456
399	RAM 404480
400	RAM 405504
401	RAM 406528
402	RAM 407552
403	RAM 408576
404	RAM 409600
405	RAM 410624
406	RAM 411648
407	RAM 412672
408	RAM 413696
409	RAM 414720
410	RAM 415744
411	RAM 416768
412	RAM 417792
413	RAM 418816
414	RAM 419840
415	RAM 420864
416	RAM 421888
417	RAM 422912
418	RAM 423936
419	RAM 424960
420	RAM 425984
421	RAM 427008
422	RAM 428032
423	RAM 429056
424	RAM 430080
425	RAM 431104
426	RAM 432128
427	RAM 433152
428	RAM 434176
429	RAM 435200
430	RAM 436224
431	RAM 437248
432	RAM 438272
433	RAM 439296
434	RAM 440320
435	RAM 441344
436	RAM 442368
437	RAM 443392
438	RAM 444416
439	RAM 445440
440	RAM 446464
441	RAM 447488
442	RAM 448512
443	RAM 449536
444	RAM 450560
445	RAM 451584
446	RAM 452608
447	RAM 453632
448	RAM 454656
449	RAM 455680
450	RAM 456704
451	RAM 457728
452	RAM 458752
453	RAM 459776
454	RAM 460800
455	RAM 461824
456	RAM 462848
457	RAM 463872
458	RAM 464896
459	RAM 465920
460	RAM 466944
461	RAM 467968
462	RAM 468992
463	RAM 470016
464	RAM 471040
465	RAM 472064
466	RAM 473088
467	RAM 474112
468	RAM 475136
469</	

Burnt Chips

What is a chip? We all know that it contains memory locations but how is the information stored?

The standard description of a byte is a row of switches which may be on (0) or off (1). In electrical terms this means that a one is represented by an electrical voltage, a zero by no voltage.

This is achieved in different ways depending on whether the chip is RAM or ROM. The difference between RAM and ROM is that RAM is volatile and anything stored there disappears when the machine is turned off (usually by one of the kids playing with the master plugs). ROM is unchangeable with each memory being 'burnt in' permanently.

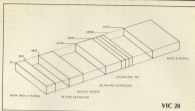
Each byte in the ROM is represented by an array of eight diodes which act like little fuses. When a chip is programmed a zero bit is created by overloading the corresponding diode. The diode blows like a fuse and the bit can no longer pass a current, the computer reads this as zero. This method is consequently known as 'blowing' a chip.

RAM chips fall into one of two categories: dynamic or static. Most of the differences will not concern us here except that dynamic is cheap to buy but requires to maintain its state. In other words the only static RAM chip holds the colour information, the rest is dynamic.

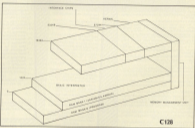
If information is held as a charge or lack of charge on arrays of tiny capacitors. This charge has a tendency to leak away from dynamic chips and must be refreshed at regular intervals. The busy Vix chip helps out here by doing the refresh every three thousandths of a second.

Small power surges at power up can gradually charge up these capacitors which is why you must never assume that any memory location is set to zero.

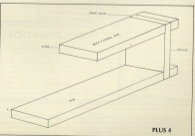
Controlling the computer's memory is the key to solving programming on any machine. In future installments we will look at the major Commodore home-computers and see what can be learnt by comparing and contrasting their chips.



VIC 20



C128



PLUS II



**Margaret Webb brings you
the latest in spelling
packages.**

FOR A LONG TIME TEACHING AND learning spelling has been approached in a very "laissez faire" manner. It was thought that correcting the way a child spelt a word would stop the creative flow and thus stultify the pupil at an important point in his educational growth. I don't wholly subscribe to this theory; the rules of spelling have to be learnt, especially in an age when literacy seems to be everywhere and being literate may help the child in a striking job market.

Of course, variety and adventure in particular, seem to be contributing to underlining any good work being done in our schools in language development. How many times have you, for example, seen phrases such as "look here", "here means there", "lots better", "to be"?

As yet, I have not seen a computer program which teaches and tests the rules of spelling such as "I before a except after c". This is surprising since it is fundamental to our spelling system (logical though it may seem on occasion). Instead, software authors prefer to tackle spelling from the "word list" approach whereby you test, by rote, the child's knowledge of lists of words. Whilst this technique has its value, it should be used to help reinforce the spelling rules and highlight the exceptions to them. There appears to be a dearth of spelling software around but here a couple which may be of help.

Word Madliber from Longstream is in the form of a game in which you move a little man around a grid collecting the letters in the correct order to spell the prescribed word. The grid is constructed from vertical and horizontal conveyor belts and has, of course, the obligatory rats which try to kick you off the grid.

The game has a number of faults. Movement along the conveyor is sluggish and can often lead to an impossible situation where you cannot

move from a letter square before it changes, thus losing a life. Another fault is the difficulty level. At the "very easy" level, words such as "notice" and "important" are given - hardly easy words! Both of these faults tend to cause the child to lose quickly and thereby give up as a failure.

However, there are not the worst parts of the game. In order to tell the player which word has to be spelled, the word is put on the screen. Surely this is well defeating.

A more effective way would be to illustrate the word to be written out. This method has its limitations in that not all words can be adequately turned into recognisable graphics. In addition, some degree of ambiguity may occur, for example, the words vase, van, pot and crock could be represented by the same picture. This approach can, however, be implemented to provide a simple learning program to help infants with reading and spelling of basic words such as colours, zoo and farm animals, toys and parts of the body. I'm not aware of any computer programs which use this approach although hand-held games have used the principle for several years by asking the user to write the word for a picture specified in a booklet.

Programming the computer can be a sort of spelling aid. Anyone who has dabbled with programming will know that a spelling mistake results in a "SYNTAX ERROR". Plying adventure games can also reinforce spelling technique. The use of an inaccurately spelled word usually results in a "hey I don't understand..." phrase. This could be used to good effect in conjunction with the graphical technique described earlier in the form of simple graphical adventures. The player would only be allowed to take an item or object if the word is typed in correctly. There must be entertaining teachers/programmers who can implement these ideas in really

effective software.

The advent of speech synthesis has brought a whole new slant to learning spelling since you can now be told what to spell.

The Cave of the Wood Wizard is a disk based game in which the child guides an explorer through eight levels of caves looking for lost jewels. He has with him a torch to find his way around and a pack of sticking plasters. The plasters are your "lives" and are used up if the explorer trips over a rock or is bitten by "monsters". The torch battery levels to run down and leaves you in the dark unable to find your way out. Both battery power and band-aids can be replenished by spelling words correctly when the wizard magically appears and tells you a word.

There are 10 carefully graded spelling lists starting at list one with very simple words such as ant, cat, red, man, try and work, through to level 10 words such as synchronous, photosynthesis, correspondence and jeopardised. All in all, about a thousand words which will keep players of all ages busy. The animation is not exactly state of the art but it's some of the best around for educational software. Certain words can be difficult to understand because of the limitations of electronic translation but this is the best spell and spell game I've seen. The surprising feature is that it was written in 1983 and rather sadly, it's American. Why can't our programmers produce comparable work?

Time for a quick "Crie de Coeur". You may have noticed that Teacher'sPet has not appeared every month recently. The simple facts are that I'm not receiving sufficient new material (even though the Editor does his best) to give you new ideas. I would be grateful if all you publishers/authors/software importers out there would tell me (via the Editor) of new products which you are handling.

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Here, at Your Commodore, we pride ourselves on the quality of listing that we print. Unfortunately, this usually means that they are also very long, thus taking longer to type in and leaving more room for errors. All of the listings in Your Commodore are taken straight from a printout of working programs. It is therefore very unusual for errors to appear in the magazine.

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one cassette.

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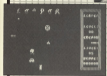
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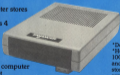
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Gordon Hamlett has been giving his C64 some speech therapy with the help of Superior Software.

THE GIFT OF THE GAB!

THINK OF ALL THE BAD NAMES YOU have ever called your computer. Maybe when your latest program has just crashed for the umpteenth time or when, after several hours of playing, you have failed to beat your best score on the latest mega-game by a measly 25 points. Certainly my machine has had to suffer some decidedly unsparliamentary terms. And isn't it a relief to know that the best can't answer back?

Well, I'm afraid that I've got some bad news for you. Using the latest utility from Superior Software, your Commodore cannot only answer you back, but the speech is of such a quality that you will even be able to understand what it says to you!

Speech!, as the name suggests, allows you to include speech in your own programs. When you consider all the vagaries of the English language, with such potential problems as phrasing, though, cough and laugh, you will see that this is no mean achievement. The system works by dividing the different sounds that groups of letters make into 49 different phonemes; for example, consider the following four words, hard, hat, mail and bare. All of them involve the letter "a" to give them their main vowel sound and yet all four are totally different from each other. In Speech!, you would enter the vowel sounds as HAARD, BARET, MAAI and BARE. Most of these unusual sounds are vowel sounds but there are also a few special consonant combinations such as "ah" to get silence rather than "r" to get a job.

The authors claim that you can generate an unlimited vocabulary by using these phonemes as your first task is to type in the phrase that you are interested in and see what the computer throws back at you. The chances are that it will sound either partially or nothing like what you intended. Don't worry though. The trick is to spell words phonetically using phonemes rather than spelling them normally. Thus education might become "ehduyuh kayduh". You soon become used to typing in words this way and when you play them back, they generally sound reasonable and recognizable. Once you have a phrase that is almost, but not quite, you can start tweaking and fine tuning it. This might mean changing a final "y" into a "u" or shortening or lengthening one of the vowel sounds.

Everyday conversation would be pretty boring if everything was spoken on the same note with no intonation or inflection in the voice and Speech! allows you to play about with these factors as well.

You can adjust the overall pitch of

the voice from reasonably high to very, very low. Punctuation also affects intonation. A question mark will raise the pitch of the final syllable whilst a full stop will lower it.

The commands required to control the speech are simply itself, "PITCH" and "SAY" are the two main commands. You can also adjust the emphasis placed on each individual phoneme as you aim for a more natural rendition of a word or phrase. This is done via the "SPRAX" command and is likely to involve more tinkering of your word. This seems to be a more hit or miss affair than the "SAR" command. One of the phrases that I was playing about with was "I am a Dalek. Exterminate." When I tried it direct using "SAY", the first sentence was all right but needed some changes of intonation whilst the second half was fine. When I changed to "SPRAX" though, "I am a Dalek" was excellent but the program kept throwing out all my attempts at "exterminate." Maybe I was just using the wrong phonemes but it

was annoying when it sounded like earlier.

The acid test for any speech synthesiser is how it actually sounds and whether I understand involuntarily and/or effort. Speech! is excellent on both counts, providing that you take the time and trouble to make it so. Certainly, it is great fun trying. As for what you would use it for, I am not going to say too much as it is the subject of a composition included in the package to win a pair of professional walk-talkies. Personally, I am going to set it up to say to the mother-in-law, all the things that I never had the courage to say myself.

Speech! is available from Superior Software price £9.95 cassette and £19.95 disk.

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COMMODORE CLINIC

Keith Eyskens brings you an insight into some little used Basic commands on the C64.

C64

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW ALL about Commodore Basic V2? You may assume that all it is is a few simple GOTOs, PRINTs, FOR...NEXT loops and IF...THENs, along with a mass of tedious FORs. But look again, for in the depths of the Basic ROM several unadvertised, but highly useful, statements and functions lie hidden.

To start with, here are some commands simplifying and clarifying the laborious job of printing and displaying things on the screen. Many a user has been baffled and bemused, or just bored, by the tedious array of routine field graphic characters that, when included in PRINT statements, position the cursor, change colour, and control printing in many other ways. But these confusing symbols can be replaced by the following commands:

TAB

You might have thought that the 64 does not have a TAB command, merely cursor control symbols in PRINT statements. Well, it does. At least, it does have half a TAB command. Instead of requiring row and column co-ordinates, as most Basics do, Basic V2 uses only one number, in the range zero to 255. It moves the cursor the specified number of spaces from the left-most space of the line that the cursor is on. As a screen line is 40 spaces across, six full lines can be accessed. It is most useful for positioning things in columns.

Examples:

```
PRINT TAB (20) "HELLO"
```

replaces the horrible:

```
PRINT "          20 HELLO"
```

```
PRINT TAB(100) "HELLO"
```

is the same as:

```
PRINT "[DOWN 4][RIGHT 30] HELLO"
```

SPC

This function is similar to TAB, but instead of moving the cursor the specified number of positions from the left column, it moves the cursor from its present position. This is very useful when you have a PRINT statement with a large number of spaces between items. As well as being difficult to count when typing in a listing, they waste memory. Replacing them with SPC seasons the program, saves memory, and makes the listing easier to understand at a glance.

Example:

```
PRINT "COMMODORE" SPC(20) "64"
```

replaces

```
PRINT "COMMODORE [20 SPACES] 64"
```

CHR\$

This function can be very useful in programs, where it can replace control symbols in PRINT statements. It gives the character or control with the ASCII value stated in brackets.

Example:

```
PRINT CHR$(55)
```

is the same as

```
PRINT "U"
```

Anyone trying to type in the latter command would probably have to look up the control symbol in the manual, before discovering that it is obtained by pressing the Commodore key and the right key.

Here is a list of the useful ASCII codes:

Black	144
White	1
Red	20
Cyan	159
Purple	156
Green	80
Blue	21
Yellow	158
Orange	178
Brown	149
Light red	150
Grey 1	151
Grey 2	152
Light green	153
Light blue	154
Grey 3	155
CURSOR:	
up	145
down	17
left	157
right	29
home	19
clear	146
REVERSE:	
on	18
off	146

To make your program really clear and easily understandable at a glance, set variables to the ASCII codes you want to use, as below:

```
10 RED=20: BLUE=21: WHITE=1:  
CLEAR=147: HOME=19
```

Then, later in your program, you can see them in this way:

```
100 PRINT CHR$(RED)
```

POS(N)

This little known function gives the position of the cursor. It column distance from the left of the screen. It returns a value from zero to 79, but these values from 40 to 79 mean the same as zero to 39. The number in brackets has no relevance (as in the function INT(N)) but must be included.

Examples:

```
PRINT POS(0)  
P=POS(0)
```

Next, here are a few general useful commands that you may not know about.

Save With End Of Tape Marker

This command is very useful if you have a cassette with several or many programs in it. If you tell the computer to LOAD, and give it a specific program name and it fails to find that program, it will carry on trying to find it indefinitely, even when it comes to the end of the tape.

Although the auto-stop on the Dataviewer will stop the tape, the computer will still think it is receiving data, and continue with a blank screen.

If however, you save the last program on the tape in the format shown below, it will put an end of tape marker after it. This means that, if the situation described above occurs, the computer will halt the load as soon as the tape ends, and give an indication on the screen that the program has not been found.

Example:

```
SAVE "PROGRAM NAME",1,2
```

Status

After the computer has completed an input or output operation from an external device, it sets the variable STATUS (which can be abbreviated to \$1) to give an indication of the status of the operation. If you enter PRINT STATUS after switching on the computer, \$1 will be printed.

If, however, you do it after a load error, or a file operation, you will find it prints a positive number. A detailed table giving the STATUS code values is given on page 88 of the Programmer's Reference Guide, but the most important values are those in which bits 4, 5 or 6 are set. Bit 5, after a cassette read operation, indicates a checksum error, while bit 4 indicates and unrecoverable read error or mismatch. Bit 6 indicates the end of a file.

STATUS can be used when dealing with files, to find out when the end of a file is reached, by checking bit 6, and to find out whether a read operation is successful, by checking bits 4 and 5.

Example:

```
IF STATUS AND 32 OR 64 THEN PRINT "ERROR"
IF STATUS AND 64 THEN PRINT "END OF FILE"
```

CLR

This does NOT clear the screen! It makes available all possible memory, without erasing any program in memory. It erases all variables, arrays, goes to return addresses and loops, closes all files, and resets the data pointer. It is useful in direct mode after you have run a program, and want to free memory, without erasing the program, for other

uses. It is also useful in a big program, when you want to go on to something different, for which you don't need all the old memory containing variables that you had been using.

Wait

This statement stops the program operation until the contents of a specified memory location change to match a specified bit pattern, usually in response to an external event. The computer takes the value stored in the location given, and does a logical AND operation with the next number in the command. If a third number is given in the WAIT command, then it is exclusive-ORed with the result of the first calculation. If the final result is positive, then the program continues, if not, then the process repeats.

Examples

```
10 POKE 768: WAIT 768,255
```

This clears the keyboard buffer, and then waits for location 768, which contains the number of characters in the buffer, to change from zero. This causes the program to wait until a key is pressed, and is equivalent to

```
20 GET K15: IF K15="" THEN 30
```

```
WAIT 1,2,32
```

This waits for a key to be pressed on the tape unit.

```
POKE 960: WAIT 96,1
```

This gives a pause of around 25 seconds. Location 96 is part of the three bytes storage for the built in clock, and stores units of 256 (plus 60ths of a second). This example sets it to zero, and then waits for the bit to be set. To change the length of the pause, change the 8 to another one of the following numbers: 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64 or 128. To calculate the length of the pause in seconds, multiply the number by four.

Finally, here are two useful space saving commands.

ON...GOTO/GOSUB

This statement is very useful if you have a decision point in a program, where the computer jumps to a different part of the program, depending on the value of a variable. For example, if you had a point in a program where a menu of options is displayed, and the computer asks for you to choose by giving it a number, the computer might then process this with the following lines:

```
100 IF N=1 THEN 200
110 IF N=2 THEN 250
120 IF N=3 THEN 300
130 IF N=4 THEN 150
140 IF N=5 THEN 350
```

All this can be replaced by:

```
100 ON N GOTO 200,250,300,150,350
```

All the computer does is jump to the Nth address in the list following the ON GOTO or GOSUB command. If the value of N is zero, or greater than the number of addresses listed, the computer ignores the command. Negative values give an illegal quantity error.

DEF FN

This is very useful when the same complicated calculation is done several times in one program, and is duplicated unnecessarily. It defines a function as any mathematical formula (e.g. $3 * X^2$). It has a name, like any variable, consisting of one to two letters.

Examples

```
10 DEF FNA(X)=X^3
```

sets up function A to multiply a number by three.

```
20 PRINT FNA(7)
```

calls this function, and prints the value 343. It uses the number seven in the function, as 7, and multiplies it by three. By changing the function to do other things, and put different numbers in place of the seven, the 7 in the DEF FN is a simple test and could be any variable. It is merely after the computer finds the number (in this case seven) that you give it when you use the function, and it does not affect the actual variable X if you are using it.

Some functions are independent of the value given in brackets, as in this one:

```
30 DEF FNA(X)=INT(RND(1)*10)+1
30 PRINT FNA(0)
```

This prints a random number between one and 10, and, as X is not involved in the calculation, it does not matter what number you put in brackets when you use the function.

This function is, in fact, a good example of how you can use functions to save space. Having defined it, all you need to do to get a random number is:

```
R = FNA(0) which is much simpler than
R = INT(RND(1)*10)+1
```

Finally

I hope that you will find these commands useful and that what I have written has given you a slightly better idea of what Basic can do.

If you have any ideas for advice or hints that may benefit other Year Commencement readers, then please send them into the editorial address which can be found on the Contents page.

pilot • PILOT • pilot

Add a new language to your

CGA with this program by

Microsoft Appleby.

AS WE ALL KNOW THE COMMODORE 64 is a wonderful little machine, the only thing that lets it down is the lack of a decent language for it. The Basic supplied with the machine is so outdated that it has no graphics, no sound and no other " fancy " commands.

I have therefore produced a version of PILOT that will run on the Commodore that comes complete with lots of new commands. If you have never come across PILOT before this is what the name stands for:

Programmed, Instruction, Learning or Teaching language.

As the name suggests PILOT is used very widely in educational applications, though this version is very much expanded for most others.

The original program was written in Basic and was obviously quite slow. The version presented here was compiled using the BASIC computer, making it a little faster.

In this issue of Your Commodore is the actual program. It is presented as a small Basic menu program and a series of Basic loaders.

After entering and SAVING all programs, LOAD the BASIC MENU program and RUN it. Next LOAD the BASIC LOAD1 program and RUN in the LOADERS will do the rest. When the programs have finished they will save the program PILOT on to your disk or tape, this is the program that you should LOAD and RUN in future.

Before you can use PILOT you should LOAD and run the PILOT M-C program. Once you have done this LOAD and RUN PILOT.

Also in this issue are the instructions for using the language. In a future edition I will give a few demo programs to help you on your way.

PILOT, a Short Introduction

Pilot was first implemented on main-frame computers many years ago. This version was known as CORE PILOT and had very few instructions, no provision for editing, and no numerical capability at all. The next upgrade saw the introduction of numerical handling, more than one variable, and some editing functions, this was called COMM-

MON PILOT. Finally the most recent introduction was PILOT 77 which introduced arrays, function handling, and lists more.

The present form you see is very altered to fit a micro and to utilize its facilities, and as such falls somewhere between COMMON PILOT and PILOT 77. As now you are the owner of MICRO PILOT for the Commodore 64.

A lot of extensions have been made for the introduction of graphics, sound, logic structures, classes, and a screen editor, but the interpreter is still very much a PILOT interpreter. Taking Pilot programmers should find themselves at home with it, while Basic programmers will find it is a new and pleasing experience.

There follows a description of the instructions and errors etc. The way a program is written, edited, and run will very much fit the Basic tradition so programming in PILOT is not as difficult as it first may seem.

MICRO PILOT V6.4 Command Set

These commands may only be used in command mode. I.e. not in a PILOT program when it is running but in the general housekeeping of the program, editing, and examination of the program. Parameters may be passed to these commands and their correct formatting is shown under the correct command description. Most commands need only their first two letters entered e.g. RUN for RUN will suffice, but for EXIT, NEW, and RESET all the letters need to be typed due to their destructive nature and the dire consequences should they be entered in error.

Display and Execution Commands

These are used to execute the pilot program and to examine the program's contents.

RUN - Clears all variables, stacks, and starts execution of PILOT program from the first line.

LINE - Displays PILOT program lines specified, defaults to first and last lines. I.e.

LINE - will display all program lines

LINE 38 - will display line 38

LINE 38 - 100 - will display all lines up to line 100

LINE 66 - will display all lines from 66 onwards

LINE 70-100 - will display all lines from 70

to 100 inclusive.

The listing may be slowed down by pressing the STOP key or halted with the STOP key.

PILOT - Same as the last output it to printer instead of screen.

Programming Aids and Program Interrogation Commands

These enable rapid debugging of any PILOT program by use of variable, program, and statement interrogation to trace, locate, and correct an error.

DUMP - Will display a table of current variable names in use and their values.

LISTDIS - Will display all PILOT program lines, with line numbers, that contain labels.

FIND - Will hunt for a specified string through a PILOT program and display all the lines that contain it. I.e. FIND "TEXT" will hunt for the string TEXT.

REPLACE - Will hunt through a PILOT program for a specified string and replace each occurrence of it with another specified string. I.e. REPLACE "TEXT" WITH "BASE" will replace each occurrence of TEXT in a PILOT program with BASE.

FREE - Displays the number of free bytes left for access by PILOT programs.

AUTO - Starts automatic line numbering. On each carriage return a new line number is displayed. If the line is empty the automatic line numbering stops. Lines are numbered in increments of 10. Start line number defaults to 10. I.e. AUTO 39 will start auto line numbering from line 39 in increments of 10. AUTO will start numbering from 10 in 10's.

CONTINUE - Restarts PILOT program after the STOP key has been pressed or a PILOT break (B) instruction has occurred.

Operating System Commands

These commands are involved in the initialization of the PILOT interpreter, the Basic system, and the PILOT program.

INIT - Initializes operation of PILOT interpreter and returns to Basic with the message "BASIC OK".

RESET - Total reset of pilot interpreter, total resetting of all system variables, returns interpreter program from start.

NEW - Clears all variables, stacks, and the current pilot program.

Load and Save Commands

These commands allow the user to store and recall programs on tape.

LOAD - This command is similar in operation to that of the Basic interpreter in normal operation except that when the program is being loaded it is displayed on the screen.

SAVE - This is also similar to Basic except that the program is listed on the screen as it is saved.

VERIFY - This is similar to Basic except that the program is listed on the screen as it is being checked, if the program or tape differs to that in the computer's memory then the message "PROGRAM ERROR" is displayed.

APPEND - This is a command that is similar to 'LOAD' except that the current program in memory is not erased and the program to be appended is tacked on to the end of the existing program. To append a program there must already be a program in memory to append it to.

RUN - Not really a command but a security device in this case. It is only to be used in programs made as the only instructions on the first line of a program. When a program has this as its first line it will not be when loading, it stopped with the stop key the system will reset, and when loading is completed the program will automatically run.

MICRO PILOT V6.4 Instruction Set

These instructions can be used in both PROGRAM and COMMAND mode. Program mode is during the actual execution of the PILOT program. In command mode the execution of the instructions is the same as for commands.

Instructions are composed of a single letter followed by a colon the data after that colon is dependent on the instruction. The only exceptions to this rule are labels, procedure definitions, procedure calls, and Y/N conditional flags (all explained later).

Output Instructions

These instructions allow the output of data or text to the screen or external device (i.e. printer, sound generator).

E Type. This will display the text following the instruction on the screen. Starting and terminating quotes are not needed. If the text string ends with a semi-colon ';' then the line feed is suppressed and the next line printed will be on the same line. Variable names embedded in the text will be converted into their values, and reinterpolated into the text.

Format

- 1. lots of text
- 1. lots more text.

P Print. This is the same as 'E', except output is to the printer and not to the screen.

Format

- P. lots of text
- P. lots more text.

Input Instructions

These allow the input of data or text from the keyboard/screen editor.

A Accept input. Input a string of characters into the named variable following the instruction, with a prompt of ' '. The screen editor will stop operate. If the variable name ends with a semi-colon then the PILOT program will not end with nothing being entered, but just re-displays the prompt and tries again to get an answer. If the variable name ends in an exclamation mark '!' or just a semi-colon (see above), then prompt and answer are directed to the printer (or hard copy record of dialog between pilot program and user).

Format

- A VARNAMES
- A VARNAMES;
- A VARNAMES!

I Input. This will get a character directly from the keyboard and assign it to the named variable. If no key is pressed then the variable becomes empty. If the variable name ends in a semi-colon then the pilot program waits until a key is pressed before continuing.

Format

- I VARNAMES
- I VARNAMES;

Branch and jump Instructions

These instructions interrupt the program flow and direct it to another point in the program.

J Jump. Jumps to the named label or line number. Jumping to line numbers is not recommended due to them changing whenever a program is edited, though they have a speed advantage, and when a program has been completed the command LABELS can be used in conjunction with REPLACE to convert all labels to their line number equivalents.

Format

- J label
- J 50

***** Label. This sign indicates a label and needs no colon after it. When encountered in the normal running of a program this instruction is ignored, but when a 'J' instruction is executed the computer will search through the program until the named label is found and program execution will recommence from the line following the label.

Format

- *label

Maths and String Manipulation Instructions

These allow a certain amount of maths and string manipulation of variables and numbers.

E Calculate. This will make one variable equal to either a) the contents of the string variable after any manipulation or concatenation has taken place, or b) the mathematical result of two variables or numbers, operated on by '+', '-', '*', or '/'. result=first*second makes the value of result equal to the sum of the values of the variables first and second.

Format

- E VAR1=VAR2+VAR3 - Make the value of var1 equal to the sum of the values of var2 and var3.
- E VAR1=VAR2-4 - Make the value of var1 equal to the value of var2 minus 4.
- E VAR1=5/VAR2 - Make the value of var1 equal to 5 divided by the value of var2.
- E VAR1=5*6 - Make the value of var1 equal to 5 multiplied by 6.
- E FULLNAME=FIRSTNAME+MIDDLENAME - Makes the value of fullname equal to the value of firstname+space and then the value of middlename, i.e. if firstname="Mycroft" and middlename="Apply", then the value of fullname would be "Mycroft Apply".

B Execute. This instruction takes the contents of a variable and treats it as a PILOT program line. This means it can be used for arrays and other such like as well as a form of user defined instruction. The string following the instruction may be a mixture of variables and ordinary text.

i.e. E2 where a\$="E LABEL" will execute a 'E' instruction and jump to the label "LABEL".

Format

- E instruction\$

Termination Instructions

These occur in a PILOT program whenever the running of the program needs to be interrupted and a return to command mode made.

S Stop. Ends execution of PILOT program, returns to command mode, and displays "READY" prompt.

Format

- S

B Break. Suspends program execution, suspends current program line, and displays where program was broken. Functions in an identical way to the "STOP" key being pressed. The program can be restarted from the next line by the use of the "CONTINUE" command.

Format

- B

Recursive Instructions

These enable the repeated operation of a set of instructions.

- LI** Loop. This is followed by a numeric parameter, either a variable or a number. It indicates the number of loops to be made. The rest of the loop set of instructions is given by the "L:" command (see below). Loops may be nested up to 30 deep with return address and value of the loop variable saved on the stack.

```
10 L:5
20 T:hello
30 F:and
40 F:FREE
50 L:
```

Will print "hello" said FREE on the screen 5 times

```
Format
L:5
```

- UN** Until. This defines the end of the loop. When a loop is in operation and "U:" is encountered, the parameter after the last "L:" instruction is decremented, and if still positive execution is recommenced at the line following the loop instruction. If, however, the result is zero then the loop is finished, the loop information is removed from the stack, and program execution continues from the next line. **Format:** U:

Variable Handling Instructions

These are associated with the manipulation of variables and their relative values.

- WV** Wipe variable. This will erase any variable name and value from the variable list except FREE. **Format:** W:VARIABLE.
- NV** New variable list. This erases all variable names and values from variable list except FREE. **Format:** N:
- D:** Define variable. This puts a variable name in the variable list and assigns it a value. More than one variable may be fixed in the list, but all must be separated by a colon ":". All variable values given must be included in quotation marks. **Format:** D:VARIABLE="VAL1" VARIABLE="VAL2"
- M:** Match variable with list. This instruction is the very last of PLSD's text manipulation and comparison functions. This instruction will take a named variable and compare its value with a list in one of two possible ways. The outcome of this match will set a flag to either "Y" or "N" (yes or no) depending, this is called the match

flag. This can be used to operate an instruction conditionally by putting either a Y or a N between the instruction letter and the colon (i.e. "Y:print" will only type "print" if the match flag is Y, and "N:wrong" will type "wrong" if the match flag is N. The two functions also as follows: a) the "AND" match, denoted by a "&" sign between the variable name and the list, this will only set the match flag to "Y" if ALL the items in the list are contained in the variable value, otherwise it is set to "N". b) the "OR" match, denoted by a "|" sign between the variable name and the list, this will set the match flag to "Y" if any of the members of the list are contained in the variable value, otherwise it is set to "N". These can only be a maximum of 25 items in the list.

Format ("&" matches) -
M:AND(WORLD,YES),yes. Will set the match flag to Y if either Y, yes, or yes are contained in the value of AND(WORLD).
Format ("|" matches) -
M:(ENGLAND|london, capital, england. Will set the match flag to Y if london, capital, and england are ALL contained the variable ENGLAND.

Procedure Defining and Calling

Procedures are sections of program that work much like a subroutines in Basic. Procedures may have other procedures from within them and these may be nested up to 30 deep.

Defining a procedure is done with square brackets []. The open bracket followed by the procedure name denotes the start of the procedure, and a closed bracket following the last instruction of the procedure denotes the end of the procedure. i.e. The procedure "FREE" that prints the word "free" on the screen 5 times can be defined as follows.

```
10 FREE
20 L:5
30 F:FREE
40 L:
```

If that program were to be run as it stands nothing would happen as the interpreter will ignore any procedure it comes across unless it is properly called.

A procedure is called from within a program much like a user defined instruction or command by simply having the procedure name at the program line. Procedures may not be called from command mode as this would lead to confusion with ordinary commands (i.e. To call the procedure "FREE" 10 times the following addition to the program is made.

```
50 L:10
60 FREE
70 L:
80 :
```

Line 60 is the line that calls the procedure. When this is encountered execution commences of the procedure FREE and when the end bracket "]" and all procedure is found execution recommences at line 70.

Pilot Graphics Facilities

These instructions enable the creation and manipulation of graphic shapes on the screen. These involve the use of text and a pixel (point) graphics system. The pixel system operates on a matrix of 80 horizontal points and 24 vertical points. Text can also be displayed on the screen concurrently with the pixel graphics, block graphics are treated the same way as text, text always has the highest priority, so text can be displayed on a pixel graphic shape, but a shape being drawn next text will only be drawn in gaps between words or blank areas of screen. All the display methods are done by using the "G:" instruction and there are three modes of graphic display as follows.

Mode 1

G: followed by a string in quotes. This function is identical to "T" except the text is enclosed in quotes, these are not printed and only serve to allow the use of in text cursor control and colour change functions. The semicolon, if used, must be outside the quotes. **Format:** G:"LOTS OF TEXT"
G:"LOTS MORE TEXT";

Mode 2

G: followed by two co-ordinates, in brackets, separated by a comma. This can then be followed by a string in quotes as above. The co-ordinates define the x/y position that the printing of the text starts from. These co-ordinates can be variables or constants. The x and y values must not exceed 24 horizontally, and 24 vertically. **Format:** G:(X,Y)"LOTS OF TEXT"
G:(X,Y)"LOTS MORE TEXT"

Mode 3

This is the most complex and important graphics mode as it controls the pixel graphics.

The G: instruction is followed by a nested instruction which has its own parameters following it. Variables or constants may be used. The parameter refers to positions, angles, and directions on the screen. Two methods are used, absolute plotting, and relative plotting. The absolute system treats the screen as a cartesian grid of zero to 79 on the x axis and zero to 23 on the y axis, and the

EXPAND - This doubles the width of the indicated sprite if it has not already been expanded (i.e. **G.SPRITE 5 EXPAND** - Will double the width of sprite 5.
CONTRACT - This will halve the width of the indicated sprite if it has been expanded (i.e. **G.SPRITE 5 CONTRACT** - Will halve the width of sprite 5.
G.SPRITE 5 CONTRACT - Will halve the width of sprite 5.
EXPAND - Operates the same as expands except it doubles the height (i.e. **G.SPRITE 5 EXPAND Y** - Will double the height of sprite 5.
CONTRACT - Operates the same as contracts except it halves the height (i.e. **G.SPRITE 5 CONTRACT** - Will halve the height of sprite 5.

Please see the Commodore 64 user guide for further details about sprites and graphics.

PILOT Variables

There can be up to 25 variables, each with **UNIQUE** names up to any length with all characters significant. Any characters may be used in the name. A dollar sign '\$' must be the final character of the name to indicate that it is a variable. Variable values can be either numbers or strings, which are dependent upon the context in which it is used.

Numeric Variables

There are to eight significant digits, full floating point. Strings have a numeric value of zero '0'. Scientific notation is not supported.

String Variables

These variables can have string lengths up to 255, of any characters. Numbers have a string value equal to it, i.e. 25.167 = "25.167".

Time Variable

This is a system variable which holds the current time in HH:MM:SS format. It starts up at 00:00:00 when the machine is switched on, and will reset at 23:59:59. The value can be operated on at any time as a normal variable, but it definitely must be a valid value in the above format.

Sub Stringing

The inclusion of two bracketed numbers after the variable name takes only part of the value. The first number indicates the first character to be considered, and the second number is the number of characters to be used, i.e. **WHERE NAME="MICROBITE DAVID AFFLUENT". NAME\$(1,5)** will equal "DAVID".

PILOT Error Messages

The error messages inform the user that

there is a mistake in the program, or an unpredicted event in the program has arisen. There are three kinds of error messages: command, instruction, and both. Instruction errors suspend the program execution (as in the 'I' instructions), display the message and indicate the line that the error occurred in. The command command will reentered program execution.

Example of instruction error - **"LABEL NOT FOUND ERROR (IN LINE 8)";**
 Example of command error - **"FILE NAME TOO LONG ERROR";**

Instruction Errors

TOO MANY VARIABLES. This happens when an attempt is made to define more than 25 variables.

NO SUCH VARIABLE. This occurs when an attempt is made to access a variable that has not been defined.

LABEL NOT FOUND. When a jump to a label has been made and the label does not exist, this error message is displayed.

TOO MANY MARCHEES. Used in conjunction with the march 'M' instruction, where there is more than 15 items in the march list.

PARAMETER OUT OF RANGE. Means that a number or variable has been used which is outside the acceptable range of the parameter in question.

DIVISION BY ZERO. Used in conjunction with the calculate 'C' instruction, where, in a division calculation, the denominator of the equation is equal to zero.

SPRITE. An error has occurred in defining or manipulating a sprite.

PROCEDURE END WITHOUT START. This happens when the interpreter encounters the 'J' and procedure symbol without ever starting that procedure.

PROCEDURE NOT FOUND. A call was made to a non-existent procedure.

TOO MANY PROCEDURES. Only 18 nested calls to proceed are allowed.

TOO MANY LOOPS. An attempt has been made to nest more than 10 loops.

Combined Instruction and Command Errors

SINEX. This happens when a spelling mistake occurs in a command or a program, or an incorrect command or instruction is encountered. Also it will arise when the correct format is not adhered to, although spaces can be included at various points to aid the reading of the program.

OUT OF MEMORY. Where the computer runs out of memory storage for the program, variables, or to execute any kind of memory consuming operation. (If there are more than 400 program lines.

Command Errors

FILE NAME TOO LONG. File names can

be up to 15 characters long, excess of this produces this error.

PROGRAM. After a **PIBIBFF** command if the program verified is not the same as the one in memory a program error occurs.

CONTINUE. This happens if after a **CONTINUE** command is executed and it is not possible to continue.

APPEND. If a **APPEND** command is executed and there is not program already residing in memory.

A Basic Programmers Guide to Pilot

This section lists **PILOT** commands and instructions and their related Basic commands. Commands that are accessible from Commodore Basic are in capitals. Other Basics and standard Basics are in normal type.

PILOT	Basic
I: G (mode 1)	POINT
P:	POINT N (prime)
W: S:	sound
A:	INFLU (input)
I:	GET (key)
I:	COORD
C: D:	LIST
C:	VAL (val)
E:	END
S:	STOP
R:	repeat
O:	until
N:	CLR
M:	I
+	direct
-	indirect
G (mode 2)	print print
G (mode 3)	graphics
TEXT	text
GRAPHICS	graphics
PILOT	plot set point
UNPILOT	glovever unplot reset
DRAW	draw drawto plotto
UNDRAW	undraw undrawto
	drawover unplotto
CIRCLE	circle
MOVE	cursor move
INK	ink colour
PAPER	paper colour
	background
BORDER	border colour
LINE	patern
RUN	RUN
LIST	LIST
PLS	PLS
PRE	PRE
AUTO	auto
CONTINUE	CONT
NEW	NEW
LOAD	LOAD (load)
SAVE	SAVE (save)
VERIFY	VERIFY
APPEND	append merge

There are many other pilot commands and instructions not included in this list as there is no comparison or the method is different (i.e. for left etc. see sub stringing).


```

174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

```


Listings will be much easier to enter with our new system.

COMMODORE LISTINGS ARE RATHER well known for the horrible little black blocks that always abound. Unfortunately the graphic characters which are used to represent graphic and control characters do not reproduce very well and they are also difficult to find on the Commodore keyboard.

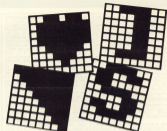
In future all control and graphic commands will be replaced by a mnemonic within square brackets. This mnemonic is not typed out as printed in the magazine but rather the corresponding key or keys on the keyboard are pressed. For example [RIGHT] means press the cursor right key; you do not type in [RIGHT]. All of the keywords, what keys to press and how they are shown on the screen are shown below.

Any character that is accessed by pressing shift and a letter will be printed as [letter].

[SA] shift and A
[S-] shift and -

Any character that is accessed by pressing the Commodore key and a letter will be printed as [Commodore letter].

[CA] Commodore and A
[C-] Commodore and -
[CT] Commodore and T



LISTINGS

If any characters are repeated the mnemonic will be followed by a number. This number is how many times you should enter the character. Any number of spaces over one will also be represented in this form.

[RIGHT]10 press cursor right 10 times
[C+0] press Commodore and + 10 times
[SPACE]10 Press the space bar 10 times

Any other characters should be easily recognizable for example CTRL-N means press CTRL and N and LEFT-ARROW means press the left arrow.

Any number of mnemonics can be enclosed in brackets for example

[TAB][SPACE][TAB]

means type 10 shift A's 10 spaces and another 10 shift A's.

Mnemonic	Symbol	what to press
[RIGHT]		left/right
[LEFT]		shift left/right
[UP]		Shift & up /down
[DOWN]		up/down
[F1]		F1
[F2]		shift & F1
[F3]		F3
[F4]		shift & F3

Mnemonic	Symbol	what to press
[F5]		F5
[F6]		shift & F5
[F7]		F7
[F8]		shift & F7
[CLEAR]		shift & CLR /HOME
[HOME]		CLR/HOME
[WINDOW]		CTRL & W
[B/SOFF]		CTRL & O

Mnemonic	Symbol	what to press
[BLACK]		CTRL & 1
[WHITE]		CTRL & 2
[RED]		CTRL & 3
[CYAN]		CTRL & 4
[PURPLE]		CTRL & 5
[GREEN]		CTRL & 6
[BLUE]		CTRL & 7
[YELLOW]		CTRL & 8

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