HARBOUR EXAMPLE FOR A NEW USER

From time to time new users will ask for help in creating a program in Harbour. From my observations these are few and far between. Initially I used dBASE and then Clipper until the early 2000s. In starting any new language it is helpful to see a simple example just to get going. The big problem really is that to do anything you need to know such a lot. Often trivial issues can appear insurmountable, or difficult to find a solution for.

The main Harbour site is comprehensive and contains plenty of information on the language and its use. It also has many pointers to related sites. There are several other helpful sites but they do require quite a lot of time to go through them. Obviously anyone with experience in Clipper, dBASE, or FoxPro would find things easier. A new user, maybe less so. Particularly with a background in Windows development. Switching to a text based, keyboard system would be a paradigm shift from thinking in Windows to working in Harbour. Harbour programs are often faster to use for inputting data, as the user avoids the need for keyboard, mouse, keyboard all the time.

Searching online for the words Harbour, or Clipper can be frustrating. Often using 'harbour clipper' as a search can remove some of the wheat from the chaff. We have all probably spent many hours assessing some software's suitability but if you are looking for a database development language to maybe replace MS-Access or similar then Harbour is a contender. It does also have several GUI interfaces to choose from. I'm minded to use on of them to convert the Address and Ticketing program and issue that. Printing does appear to be an issue. Certainly doesn't appear as easy as using say Access, with its easy to use built-in report generator.

So often I wonder if the majority looking at Harbour for the first time will simply give up. Which is a great pity as there is little software out there for database development. None have a low entry price and most require monthly fees.

Harbour being free is counterbalanced by the time you have to spend getting up to speed. It's foundation is Clipper 5.3. Of which there are few remaining books out there. Those on offered for sale often have a huge price tag that make them uneconomical. Particularly as you may be buying a pig in a poke. Not all of the Clipper books were all that helpful back in the day. Also some may be in a disappointing condition with most of the books being 25 plus years old. However, there is a great deal of information and help online.

Harbour's website does cover just about everything on Harbour and Clipper. The lack of search options can make it a little difficult to get going for new users. It is however, comprehensive and assembled by the many enthusiasts of Harbour, who are interested in it remaining. For instance, you cannot search for language details. But you can scroll up and down, which is a little slow and then double-click into greater detail. The Language Guide a must-read for new users.

It is difficult but not impossible to download the Language References to allow you to view and search them off-line. It can be irritating needing to be online in order to search for details. It can be helpful to print out details from these sites and then have searches available to help you until you are familiar.

The main Harbour website is of course :   https://harbour.github.io/
From the Harbour website you can download the Harbour Starters Guide as a PDF giving you the option to scroll, or search for Functions, Commands etc. The Harbour website includes numerous links to many associated sites and detailed information on Harbour. There is such a lot of information on the Harbour site, it can be daunting at first. Once downloaded you can run your own searches of the documents.

The Harbour Support Forum is at :   https://groups.google.com/g/harbour-users
For bug reports and wish lists see :   https://groups.google.com/g/harbour-devel

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But there are other sources out there provided by some of Harbour's elite guys. This is maybe not a comprehensive list and I apologise if I have omitted any other useful sources that should be included.

Alexander Kresin
Probably the most comprehensive learning information is from Alexander Kresin. His main website is.
https://www.kresin.ru/en/

From there you can access his help files, manuals and downloads. Some of these are:
Harbour for Beginners by Alexander Kresin   Parts 1, 2, 3 & 4 etc

Steve Litt's website gives comprehensive information with downloads on Harbour with his Beginners Guide to the Harbour Language is very good but does lean towards Linux.
http://troubleshooters.com/codecorn/harbour/harbour_intro.htm

For a Clipper 5.3 Language Reference the following website is probably the best. It is certainly to be used alongside the main Harbour website. It is logically split and sections have brief descriptions, which is really helpful. Printing those out or having them downloaded as PDFs can be useful.
https://www.itlnet.net/programming/program/reference/c53g01c/menu.html

Eric Lendvia is a regular supporter of the Harbour Forum https://groups.google.com/g/harbour-users
He has advice and software posted on:
https://github.com/EricLendvai [plus many postings on Harbour User Group]

Clipper Tutorial : A printable Tutorial with 56 helpful pages for Harbour/Clipper you can save as a PDF at:
https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Clipper_Tutorial:_a_Guide_to_Open_Source_Clipper(s)/Printable_version

Viva Clipper
vivaclipper.wordpress.com

My journey with Harbour
http://www.mozzarellaincarrozza.it/harbour/
A website that is worth a look. Helpful and includes a case study of C87 to Harbour.
(unfortunately am unable to correctly identify the site owner/author)

Harbour GUI Development
The Harbour website provides details of a range of GUI software suppliers, most free, some not. There appears to be little information by way of comparison, or opinion. In contribs\gtwvg\tests there are examples of windows-like objects you can use with a few examples. Search also for Harbour HB_GT_INFO online.

Don't forget the useful Harbour Forum which gives a fairly basic search and offers a great deal of information if you can spend the time. It is a very simple forum design and unfortunately hasn't any topic headers. As with other language forums, you are highly unlikely to be the first with a particular problem. So what you need to know will have been asked before. But as with all forums your terminology may not be the same as others. That problem and some misspellings can sometimes result in failure, requiring patience and a lot of time.

My offering gives you a starting point with Harbour programming. It has a menu to start and an example of a name and address screen/form for adding, editing and viewing the underlying table. I've also included a very simple Ticketing system, allowing you to add and edit tickets, with a customer lookup into the Address Table. The software code includes some help and explanation on the use of some of the Harbour language. It also includes some advice on using some basic language and operations. Hopefully it gives some help to someone getting started using Harbour.

I am Cotswold GB on the Harbour User Group Forum using the name Vincent

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