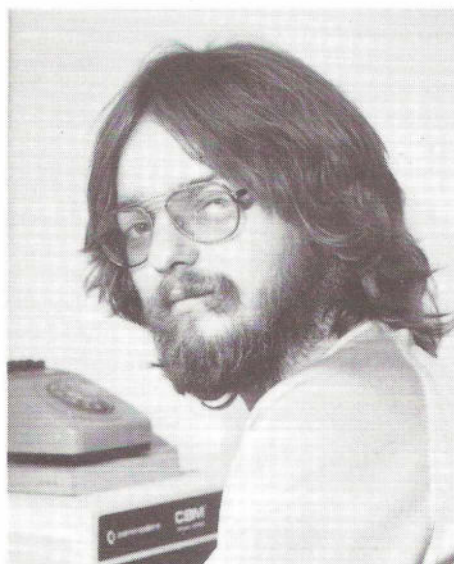


Editorial



A number of people have enquired at one time or another : "How did you get the job of editor ?" Some have even asked "Why did you get the job of editor !?". For those of you with inquisitive minds, we present "The story so far....."

A little bit of background history. After leaving school with a variety of 'O' and 'A' levels in a somewhat peculiar mixture of subjects, my first encounter with the working world was as a lumberjack. Working in the far north of Scotland, where it was VERY cold, I eventually decided that this wasn't for me, mainly because it involved a lot of hard work. So off I went to university, University College London in fact, to take a degree in Astronomy. Despite discovering the student bar I finally emerged with a degree, and set off on the job hunt.

It took me six months to get that job. Six months in a bedsit watching the goldfish swimming around and turning the stereo up to 78 r.p.m. to get the cat off it is a long six months. As soon as I mentioned that I'd got a degree in Astronomy people tended to say one of two things. Either "Oh, can you read my palm ?" Telling them that their hands needed washing didn't get one the job. The alternative response was "Ah, taking over from Patrick Moore are we ?", which didn't go down very well.

At last a job!

Ultimately my saviour arrived in the form of Nick Green, now Special Projects Manager at Commodore, but

at that time in charge of the Software Department. Quite why Nick decided to take me on when others didn't I've never quite worked out : perhaps it was the drinks I bought him in the bar that evening!

After a stint of answering the telephones and sending out dealer leads, I graduated onto the cassette library and ended my days in software as software administration manager. It was then that I got the call into "The Office". We referred to it as "The Office" because it usually meant doom and gloom whenever we entered. When the conversation started I thought that this was what I had in store for me.

"Peter, you've been with us for over two years haven't you ?"

True, I thought, but is this the kind of thing that one slips into everyday conversation ?

"Have you ever thought of doing another job ?"

It was around about this time that I fell on the floor. But rescue was at hand.

"How would you like to be editor of the newsletter ?"

After due thought and consideration I thought, well, why not ? Something different if nothing else. What you've seen in the last seven months has been the result : I hope you approve!

Working for Commodore

So what is it like to work for Commodore ? As you probably know Commodore is an American company, with distributors dotted around the world : we happen to be the largest one outside of the States. The usual company hierarchy exists, but (I think!) I get on well enough with the people above me. The over-riding impression of working for Commodore is that it's interesting : no two days are ever the same. It is also good fun, and at times considerably irritating, like, I would imagine, any company anywhere. But at the end of the day it's the interest factor that comes out on top.

Specifically, producing a newsletter is a very interesting job : the number of diverse application stories I see is growing all the time, and certainly on

the increase is the number of letters I receive from you. All the programming hints are gratefully received : anything that will save other people "head scratching" is always welcome.

The Contents

Having mentioned the newsletter we come onto the contents of this one. The now standard features are all there, including the Jim Butterfield article, the reviews section, what the Papers Say, the peripheral spot, disk use for beginners, and so on. The Basic programming section this time covers such features as merging files, line protection, sorts and relative files, whilst on machine code we have a number of useful utilities.

Articles that go into more detail in specific areas include one on using the User Port, from A.H. Potten. Aimed at the beginner who has never encountered the user port before, it describes Mr. Potten's early attempts (and successes in using the port, and suggests various application areas. He mentions topics like simulation of chemical process control, burglar alarms and even a PET controlled Christmas tree! (Less than fifty shopping days to go).

British Telecom leap to the rescue of Computhink disk drive owners who've been wishing to use Jim Butterfield's Cross Reference program. They've converted his program to work with these drives, and in a well documented article show precisely how it's been done.

Good news for old rom 8K PET owners who want to go to Basic 4.0. As you may be aware one of the problems facing you has been the fact that the old PETs had 28 pin sockets, and all the chips to convert to Basic 4.0 are 24 pin. In an article from Mogens Moller Nielsen of Denmark he explains precisely how one can overcome this problem, and at the same time goes into detail on how to produce your own character generator to, for instance, display pound signs on the screen.

Communications

One of our regular contributions, Pete Gabor from Datatronic in Israel, has sent in a program called Leapfrog,

and if you're an 8032 owner I've added a few notes to enable you to use the program. Although a game it does display a number of interesting programming features which will be of help if you're a relative newcomer to the Basic programming area.

A concurrent clock for the PET? Read on

Another item for old rom 8K users is a conversation of a program that was in an earlier newsletter, but which was written specifically for Basic 2. It's a single stroke key print routine, and thanks to Mr. Shaw of the Merseyside Microcomputer Group for providing the modifications.

Apart from the usual mixture of short listings and strange photographs, the other main feature in the main body of the magazine is an article called "Connecting the General Instruments AY-3-8910 Programmable Sound Generator to the 6502/6800 bus". More music for the PET!

The special central feature this time is once again back onto education after our forays into the world of communications. The main item of interest concerns itself with COMAL, and in particular with information from the COMAL Users Group from Madison, Wisconsin. Under the leadership of Len Lindsay they are rapidly becoming the world COMAL centre, and anything they produce I'll bring to you through the medium of this newsletter. If you've done any development work in COMAL let me know, as I'm sure Len, and other readers, would be very interested.

The address to send any contribution to is:-

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'DIAL-A-DEMO' MOBILE COMPUTER DEMONSTRATION UNIT

Da Vinci Computers of Edgware have launched a new service for potential customers - a mobile demonstration unit.

Believed to be the first of its kind, the unit is luxuriously fitted with deep pile carpet, and is able to seat five for a demonstration in air-conditioned comfort.

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