



## Remembering – Amstrad CPC 464

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When Alan Sugar's Amstrad bought out the Sinclair brand, the 8-bit world gave forth a bit of a shudder; after all, our precious Spectrum was now part of the company that made those strange, really long computers with the funny green screen.

Amstrad, it can be said, had its fair share of animosity from the user base, however, looking back now, in the cold hard light of maturity, the CPC range was a really good home computer.

I admittedly never owned one; my friend did though, and where I had my Spectrum, he would be found playing on his Amstrad. Looking back there was a certain level of envy associated with the CPC 464 crowd. The playground was cut down the middle with a silicon curtain: Spectrum on one side, and the Commodore on the other. When asked which computer was king, the reply could have started off a playground war. The Amstrad users though, simply shrugged their collective shoulders and stated their preference; as such, they were left alone.

# A complete workstation for the price of a home computer.



**£249**  
Computer complete with green screen VDU (CT04)

**£359**  
Computer complete with colour monitor (CTM04)

**CPC 464 complete with monitor and datacard**

**It's mouthwatering.**  
64K of RAM, 32K of ROM, a high resolution green screen VDU, integral cassette data recorder, typewriter style keyboard, numeric keypad and a very fast extended BASIC. All for £249. (The CPC 464 is also available with a colour monitor.)

of the CPC 464's high specification and speedloading capability. Which means even complex programs can be loaded quickly.

Business applications, educational programs and arcade games are all designed to make maximum use of CPC 464's impressive graphics, stereo sound and processing abilities.

**Amstrad User Club.**  
Members enjoy immediate benefits like the privilege card, Club binder, regular magazine, competitions for

**AMSTRAD CPC 464**

**AMSTRAD**

**ONE GREAT IDEA AFTER ANOTHER**

**Boots Comet Dixons**  
**Menzies Rumbelows**

**High quality software.**  
A wider range of programs is already available and we're expanding it rapidly. The software takes full advantage

**Unlimited scope for expansion.**  
We've thought of everything you're likely to need in the future. That's why there's a built-in parallel printer interface. A low cost optional disk drive system including DPM (with the option to access 3000 programs) and LOGO. Joystick port. And the virtually unlimited potential of the Z80 data bus with sideways ROM support.

Finally, a power supply and modular (MPS) allow you to connect your CPC 464 green screen VDU system to a colour TV.

**Optional disk drive (DD1) includes interface CPSF and LOGO (£109.95)**

**Optional colour monitor (CTM04) is available at an extra £110.00. Combined with the CPC 464, it offers a high performance text processing system for only £469.95.**

**Frank Jack Digital Research**  
Full list to know more about the new CPC 464 complete computer system. Please send literature right away.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
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The Amstrad Computer Electronics plc, Brookwood House, 149 King's Road, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4EP. Tel: Brentwood (0275) 228900.

Looking at the CPC 464 it was an intelligent design. With just two components: keyboard and a monitor, the user had a simplistic, self-contained unit – no ugly power packs, and just a single plug from the monitor. It was fairly reasonably priced too, with the green screen model coming in at around £199 and the colour option at £299. There's little wonder it was popular to begin with; the Evening Standard, announcing the launch of the Amstrad CPC 464 even labelled it as 'the People's Computer' likening it to the VW Beetle.

## Its history

The Amstrad CPC 464 was launched on 12th April 1984. This was Amstrad's first foray into the fledgling home computer world, and a long way from its humble beginnings in 1968 and Alan Sugar selling car aerials from a van in the East End.

Amstrad already had a good reputation with its consumer Hi-Fi's, a self-contained unit that was dirt cheap, but surprisingly well constructed. The idea behind the CPC 464 too was well-conceived, in Sugar's autobiography he mentions "My concept was simple: Mum and Dad don't want little Johnny taking over the TV set, so our computer should come with its own monitor, have a full-sized keyboard and a built-in cassette mechanism for loading software and hit a target price of £199."

The initial project had its fair share of setbacks. Paul Kelly, one of the lead engineers for the project had collapsed from exhaustion and left, and after five years of developmental hell there still wasn't a recognisable computer. After that, Amstrad brought in replacement engineers Roland Perry and William Poel. The duo were hired

as consultants from their founded company, Ambit, and set to work creating the motherboard for the CPC 464 skeleton that was already developed.

After the CPC 464 was launched, its popularity helped fund a further five machines: 664, 6128, 464Plus, 6128Plus and a console, the GX4000. The company then moved into the PC market, with the Mega PC and followed with a number of technical flops. By 2007 the company was a shadow of its former self, and was sold to BSKyB.

However, the CPC 464 is still a dominant machine in the retro scene, and one of the best British home computers of all time.

### **The good**

Lots of memory, a decent colour screen, easy to setup and use.

### **The bad**

The built-in tape deck was a bit dodgy at times. Some lazy game ports from the Spectrum.

### **Did you know..?**

- Its development name was Arnold, an anagram of Roland Perry's first name.
- Production ceased in 1990.
- It had 27 colours across three modes: 160 x 200 16 colours mode0, 320 x 200 4 colours mode1, 640 x 200 2 colours mode2.
- It had a Zilog Z80 processor, hence the lazy Spectrum game ports.

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