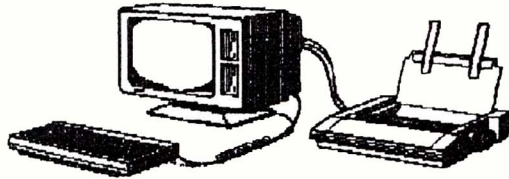


MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
NOVEMBER 95

HEADS OF THE VALLEYS PCW USERS GROUP



Club meetings are held on the first Friday of each month at 7.30pm at the address below-

BIRCHACRE
CROES BYCHAN
LLWYDCOED
ABERDARE
MID. GLAM.
CF44 0EJ.

Tel.01685-874972

Further details can be obtained by contacting either ROY UNDERWOOD on ABERDARE 01685-874972 or ANTHONY HILL on CARDIFF 01222-618012

The aim of the club is to further the knowledge of PCW users, so that they can derive the full benefit from their computer.

Help and advice can be given on most software, this includes such programmes as LocoScript, Masterfile, MicroDesign, ProScan, SuperCalc, Mini Office, Comms. The club also has a large library of Public Domain files.

A file transfer facility is available, i.e. copy files from 3" disk onto a 3.5" disk, also CP/M files can be copied to MS-DOS formatted disk's, and MS-DOS files copied to CP/M formatted disk's.

EDITORIAL

I mentioned briefly in last months meeting that there were rumours that Amstrad were bringing out a new PCW. It has now been confirmed that the new machine PCW16 is available. It is packed with new features including wordprocessor, speadsheet, diary, alarm clock, calendar, address book etc. The new machine uses WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) designed by Creative Technology (MD3), so that what you see on screen is exactly the way it will print out. It is available with a choice of two printers (CanonBJ30 inkjet or OKI400w laser), or you can buy the PCW16 separately if you already have a suitable printer. For further information contact Amstrad Direct on 0800-338844.

All members interested in Comms (communications) will be sad to hear that "THE MESSAGE" has ceased publication as from issue #10. "THE MESSAGE" was the only UK paper-zine extolling the virtues of social Comms and the Net, and was edited and produced by Malcolm Arnold.

The Christmas Computer Shopper Show 95 is the UK's largest annual computer event and will run from Thursday 30 November to Sunday 3 December 1995. The Christmas Computer Shopper Show 95 will take place at the Grand Hall, Olympia, London. Advance tickets can be ordered on the ticket hotline number 0171-2440244.

Another event is the AMS'95 Computer and Electronic Show will be held on Saturday 11 November (10am-4pm) at the Bingley Hall, Stafford. For further information contact Sharward Promotions 01473-272002.

ALL FORMATS COMPUTER FAIRS

26 November NAC (Royal Showground) Stoneleigh

AUCTIONS

11 November National Motorcycle Museum, Birmingham.

18 November BAWA Leisure Centre, Filton Bristol.

Next meeting 1 December 1995 7.30pm.

FIFTEEN TO ONE ANSWERS

- 1) From the first six letters on the top line of the respective keyboard.
- 2) Bulletin Board System (BBS).
- 3) Left cursor key recalls last typed command.
- 4) 4.77MHz.
- 5) Screen clears.
- 6) Integrated circuit (chip).
- 7) Eight.
- 8) Three.
- 9) Basic unit of information in a binary numbering system (Binary digit).
- 10) The science of designing machines, tools, and computers so that people find them easy and healthful to use.
- 11) Eighty two.
- 12) He runs a Bulletin Board System (BBS). Acronym for SYStem Operator.
- 13) A disk containing the operating system and all files necessary to start and run the computer.
- 14) Acronyms for ' End Of File ' and ' End Of Line '.
- 15) Will. As the first wave of Zulu warriors attacked, Stanley Baker stood up and said " Fire at will ".

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

THE END OF PHOTOGRAPHY AS WE KNOW IT?

What is Digital Photography?

Basically digital photography is the use of a light sensitive floppy disc or CCD to record light. Unlike conventional cameras which use film the digital camera uses a CCD which records the image you are photographing digitally and then stores the image onto a hard drive or image memory card leaving the CCD free to photograph the next image.

Advantages of Digital Photography

The image photographed with a digital camera can be viewed instantly so if for example you are taking a family portrait you can view your photograph and if little Johnny is poking his tongue out you can delete the image without having wasted any film, give little Johnny a clip around the ear and take the photograph again.

The CCD in a digital camera can be used over and over again so unlike conventional cameras once you have used a film up you do not have to go out and buy another one.

Professional digital cameras are based on top of the range Nikon 35mm cameras and use conventional Nikon autofocus lenses. So they are like using a normal 35mm SLR camera but without film.

The digital camera has advantages in commercial photography and in press photography. For example commercial photographers can use the digital camera in their studio to take a portrait which can then be downloaded onto a PC computer via a programme such as Adobe Photoshop and then printed out instantly using a high quality digital printer such as the Fujix Pictography 3000 digital image printer. This enables the client to see the image instantly.

Press photographers using digital cameras have the advantage of speed over conventional negative cameras. For example if a photographer working for an evening newspaper in Wales is assigned to cover the Wales v Scotland rugby match in Scotland and their newspaper wants three images in time for their Saturday sports edition with a deadline for photographs of 4.00pm a photographer using conventional film will only be able to photograph the match for the first ten minutes before having to leave the ground to process his film and wire over his images one by one

using a negative transmitter. A photographer using a digital camera will be able to photograph the game for a lot longer then transmit his pictures using a laptop computer with a modem which links directly to the camera and a mobile phone without even leaving the ground.

Disadvantages of Digital Cameras

The main disadvantage of the digital camera is its price. A professional digital camera with power supply kit, adobe photoshop plug in module without any lenses starts from around o10,000. The digital camera industry is still in its infancy and as more people switch to digital photography the price will come down.

At the moment the quality of the digital image although rapidly increasing is not as good as conventional film. Also unlike with conventional film where there is a vast world-wide network of high street shops where you can get your films processed and printed quickly at the moment you can only get digital images printed onto paper at a limited number of outlets.

The future of Digital Photography

Digital photography is likely to take over from conventional photography as the image quality becomes better and as the cost of the cameras reduce. Conventional photography will probably survive as a medium but over the next ten years or so digital photography will gradually take over as the most popular medium just as colour photography has taken over from black and white. With the worlds leading film manufacturers such as Kodak and Fuji investing heavily into digital photography you can be sure that the digital image is here to stay. The control over which the digital image gives to the user is sure to appeal to the consumer so the days of the darkroom under the stairs are surely numbered!

Steven Phillips

EDITORS NOTE

Steven Phillips is a press photographer and is currently working for the Western Mail and South Wales Echo newspapers in Cardiff.

RUGGED RACER

A game by Dynamic Data Systems

The game is set on very rough ground, miles away from civilisation. Each racer challenges his colleagues as to who can survive the longest in these conditions. The easiest route is the shortest and widest (which will not obtain a high score), while the most difficult is narrow, winding and very long. Each player will have his preference - some like to start on the basic track and progress gradually, while some like a challenge straight away.

The object of the game therefore is to steer our way around the randomly generated course without crashing. You steer your car by using Q for left and P for right. You can only see a few metres in front of you because the course is always changing direction

The first level starts off at a fairly slow pace, but the higher the level, the faster it gets!

Some of the special features of the game include:

1) Permanent high scoring system. The 'Hi-Scores' board is written to disc after every session. This means that when you load the game again, the "Hi-Score" table will already be set for you, providing you with a permanent challenge. For this reason, your game disc must remain in the drive while Rugged Racer is in operation.

2) Saved Options. Rugged Racer also allows you to save your preferences to disc so that when you load the game it will already be set up for you. The options you are allowed to specify are whether you want the screen inverted, whether you want a beep on crashing and whether you want a border to appear around the menu.

3) Randomly drawn tracks. The game is not based on a pre-drawn track - it is randomly-generated and so unlike some games, it will not be possible to learn any pattern.

4) Other features. Once you reach 15Km, a distance board will appear every 5 Km to tell you how far you have travelled. Also, occasionally the odd piece of wreckage and weed sweeps past you, not unusual in an area where so many accidents have occurred in the past.

Once you have prepared a game disc and loaded the game (as described on the enclosed information sheet), a menu will appear on the screen from which you have to make a selection - either 1 to 4 for a new game, 5 to change the options or 6 to finish the current session. There are four levels of play. Once a level has been completed, you automatically move onto the next level and your score accumulates. Of course you may start on the higher levels but your score may not be high enough to reach the 'Hi-Scores' board.

When you have finished a game, Rugged Racer checks to see if you have achieved a high score. If you have, you will be prompted for your name and a new entry will be created for you on the score board. The complete board is saved for you once the current session has finished.

If you want several games in succession you may want to turn the menu border off because this creates a delay between games (the next paragraph discusses this procedure). Also, rather than returning to the menu each time a game has finished, it is possible to press the SPACEBAR when the 'distance travelled' message appears on the screen, which will re-start that level (naturally with the score set to zero).

The options are changed by selecting 5 from the menu. The current selections appear on the screen. It is then simply a matter of typing the number of the option you wish to change and then a Y or an N to change the option. Pressing [EXIT] will return to the menu and save the new options to disc.

If you own an AMX mouse and DESKTOP, you may use this with Rugged Racer. Copy the file AMX.COM to your game disc and type AMX KEYS. Type Q when prompted for 'left' and P when prompted for 'right'. Press return at the other prompts. Due to a bug in the AMX program, it appears that most versions do not allow the saving of definitions. Although they appear to save on disc, it is not possible to call them back. So, if you want to use your AMX mouse, you will probably have to set up these key definitions each time. Other hardware such as joysticks and other mice may be supported if they are programmable - just use Q for 'left' and P for 'right' when prompted.

We hope you like using Rugged Racer. We will be happy to receive any comments on the program. We are continually updating our software and comments from existing users form part of this process. We keep records of all people that purchase our products so that upgrades can be offered in the future.

Finally, you are reminded that this software is not 'public domain' or 'shareware' and must not be copied for friends or colleagues under any circumstances. The software is very reasonably priced - encourage others to buy their own copy and stay within the law.

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BA3 1JP.

