

NEWSLETTER OF THE DRAGON USER GROUP

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Here we are at issue three, membership is still going up, if slowly, and we are able to bring you a special offer from Snip Software. Talking of whom they are also allowing us to tag along on their stand (38) at the 6809 show so I hope to see you there.

We have been through the membership forms that you have sent in to try and see the direction in which the club and newsletter should move in the future, it seems that a lot of you have some serious systems running under OS-9 and FLEX and there are even some with a true high level language (sorry all you BASIC hackers). To which end we would like to start up some sort of a systems slot in the newsletter, that would cover business software, operating systems and the more advanced languages that are available to the Dragon, however to do this we need a volunteer as neither Paul nor I have machines capable (at present) of running the necessary software. so if you're sitting out there with an itchy typing finger and a 64 with discs get in touch. Finally on the subject of other languages for the Dragon if anyone is really stuck with a Pascal or C program I may be able to help out, and if anyone has heard of a LISP or PROLOG interpreter for the Dragon let me know -PLEASE.

**A PRINTERTWENTY POUNDS (PART 3)**  
By Peter Williams.

As promised in part 2 details will be given this month of the hardware that will transform the parallel 5 bit hex data from the Dragons printer port into the appropriate serial format for the teleprinter. There are two stages; parallel to serial and 5 volts to 80 volts.

The conversion to serial can be achieved by the use of a UART (Universal Asynchronous Receiver Transmitter). fig1. shows the connections to the UART. Any pins not shown need not be connected, they are concerned with the receiver section which is not needed in this case. The other chips needed for this part of the circuit are a timer and an inverter.

The following notes of explanation may be useful. The connections to pins 35,36,37,38 and 39 configure the output to bit word length with one and a half stop bits, which is the format needed by the Teleprinter. The 555 timer is set up to provide a clock rate of 800Hz. which gives the correct baud rate of 50. The busy connection from pin 22 prevents the Dragon from sending the next character until the present one has been cleared. The inversion needed at pins 23 and 22 is achieved using two gates of a 74LS04.

Fig 2. shows the circuit diagram that will convert the TTL levels of the UART into the 80 volt levels needed by the Teleprinter. The opto-isolator is to protect the low voltage parts of the circuit, and the Dragon itself from any possibility of damage from the high voltage part of the circuit. The switching works as follows :-

State 1. opto-isolator off, T1 on, T2 on, T6 on, T7 on, +80v at TG out.  
State 2. opto-isolator on, T1 off, T3 on, T8 on, T9 on, -80v at TG out.

Component details:-

All NPN transistors 2n3440 or MJE 340  
All PNP transistors 2N5415 or MJE 350

all diodes 1N4003  
r1 to R10 0.25 watt. R11 to R14 1 watt.  
capacitors 100v rating.

The terminals of the Teleprinter control unit are clearly marked so that you can identify the correct points for the 80volt connections and the signal. Fig 3. shows the same pin connections at the Dragons printer port.

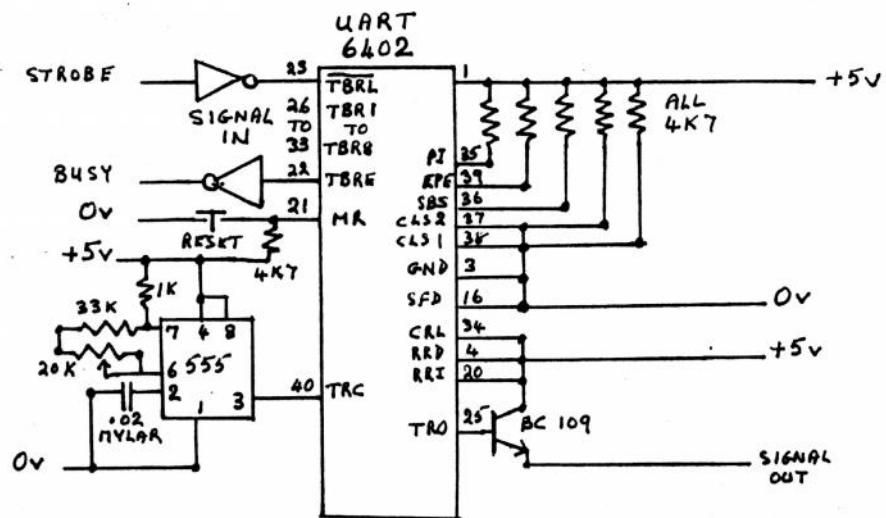


FIG 1. PARALLEL TO SERIAL.

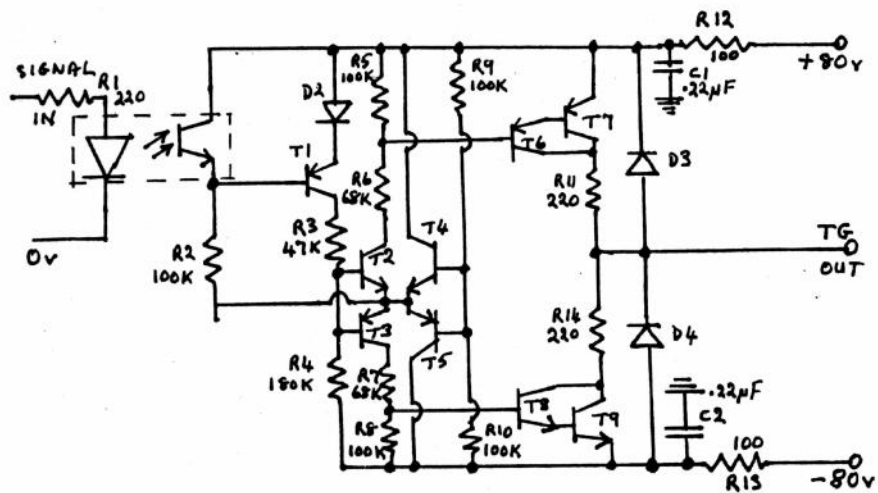


FIG 2. 5 VOLTS TO  $\pm 80$  VOLTS.

1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19
STROBE	BIT 0	BIT 1	BIT 2	BIT 3	BIT 4	BIT 5	BIT 6	BIT 7	ACK
2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20
+5V	+5V	0V	0V	0V	0V	0V	0V	0V	BUSY

FIG 3. CONNECTIONS TO DRAEON.

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The system described in this series of articles has been in regular use for about a year and works very well. I have incorporated routines in the software so that when first loaded the user can choose whether to operate in the 'overprint' mode which produces missing characters by the use of two existing keys, or the quicker mode in which either a space or a single alternative character is printed. The program also includes a text screen dump routine. If anyone is interested in converting a Teleprinter I will be happy to provide a copy of the software for the nominal price of £2.00 to cover the cost of tape, postage, packing &c. The address is 22 Grove Park, Burbage, Hinkley, Leics., LE10 2BJ.

The next development of this system is to do all the timing and parallel to serial conversion in software and to use relays to change from 5 to 80volts. This would considerably simplify the hardware and therefore reduce the cost of the operation. When this stage has been successfully completed I will write another article. In the meantime I shall be glad to hear from anyone who is attempting this or any similar project with the Dragon.

IKON ULTRA DRIVE  
by Gary Coxhead

To quote the advertising blurb, a 'Reliable, Automatic, High Speed Storage system.' Can that be believed? Well after three months of regular use the answer has to be a resounding 'Yes'. At £63.40 (inc. VAT & p&p), the Drive is not cheap, but it is not a lot dearer than some dedicated cassette players and it is far cheaper than disc Drives. Although not as fast as Discs it has one advantage over them in that it uses no memory at all, so ALL your Basic and Machine Code programs will transfer and run on the ultra Drive.

The unit is a neat 3" metal cube with ribbon cable and cartridge attached. There is no external power supply as the unit draws its power from the cartridge port. It is based around a Phillips personal dictating machine and uses the same size minicassettes (15 mins each side). Capacity of the cassettes is approximately 200k (100k per side) and access time is fast, a full 32k program loads in approximately 30-40 seconds. Reliability is excellent but some brands of cassette are not so good. Phillips own brand seems to be about the best (ordinary ones) and cost about £2.10 each.

The cartridge, which plugs into the expansion port, houses a 4k eeprom with the operating system therein. The commands of the system are similar to the standard cassette commands but using LOAD"" instead of CLOAD"" &c. All the commands are in addition to the standard Basic and therefore both Ultra Drive and cassette can be used together. The system is completely automatic and firmware driven. No more pressing Play or Play/Record. The only button is the cassette eject. one absolute godsend is that you get no more dreaded I/O errors if you halfway through a program, the drive just ignores this and looks for the next file header and promptly loads it!! As usual though the tape must be positioned prior to saving but this is easily done with the SKIP command.

Useful facilities include :- saving protected files (i.e. Break Key is disabled and program Auto-runs on loading) both Basic and MC programs can be Auto-run using the RUN and RUNM commands; rewinding the tape to a specified position; DIRECTORY -which fast reads past the headers to give name of file and other details; append Basic files.

Other more cosmetic commands include BREAK OFF, FAST and OLD. I would have liked to have seen an AUTO line numbering command.

One nice touch is that all displays of error codes and the like are in plain english e.g. "LOADING", "NO TAPE" &c.

Are there any disadvantages? Well there has to be one. Unfortunately the Drives file handling is rather poor. Numeric arrays are handled okay with LOADD and SAVED commands, but unfortunately, because of the way Basic shifts string arrays about in a program, this makes life a little difficult. If the arrays are suitably DIMed at the beginning of a program that's okay, but you still have to use a FOR...NEXT loop to save them. The problem is certainly not

insurmountable to anyone with a good knowledge of the machine, but I feel this is one area where the Drive comes second to cassettes, even with their slow speed. One answer would be to use the Drive for the program and the cassette for storing data, but this is not very satisfactory.

Over all? Well apart from the criticisms the unit is still value for money. It is an affordable alternative to cassettes for those who can't run to Discs (including me!). Its speed and ease of use certainly made me feel, after 3 months use, 'how did I manage before'.

Obviously I cannot give every detail of the machine in this short review, but should anyone wish to know more, do not hesitate to phone me on 0375 672137.

Over a year ago a program called 'Ring of Darkness' was released by Wintersoft. At the time it was by far the best programme (technically at least) for the Dragon. Even Today it can still hold its own. Now said company has released the sequel 'Return of the Ring'. Most sequels are poor, but I would go as far as to say that this programme will be one of the all time greats for our friendly Dragon.

The layout is much the same as the original in that it takes a long long time to load. The actual plot is now that you have captured Shedir you have to return him (her)? to their rightful place. Instead of having a 3D dungeon you now have a 3D moon forest which actually has night and day.

The graphics are superb in this sequel and there is a lot more detail than before. The most significant change is that the programme will now accept multi word sentences. This is needed so that you can transact with other (independent) characters which help you with your quest.

I suppose you could liken it to 'The Hobbit' or 'Valhalla'. Most Dragon owners have been crying out for these programmes to be available for the Dragon but now we have got 'Return of the Ring' there is no point!

Solving this quest is going to take a long time (maybe years) because After you have completed the game side of the tape there is a separate standard text/graphic type adventure to be solved. Therefore this cassette could be considered to have three separate games on it, and at £9.95 it must be great value. Buy it if only to find out what our good 'ole Dragon is really capable of. But be warned, it is far from easy!

I would also like to thank Wintersoft for their excellent customer service department. My Dragon refused to load four different copies but Wintersoft still soldiered on and sent me a copy that would load (it was my Dragons fault not Wintersofts).

I have had a query from the Mischevious Maniac from Middlesborough, otherwise known as Ian Bean. His problem is with two Tandy adventures 'Pyramid 2000' and 'Bedlam'. Firstly he wants to know how to get past the snake Pyramid 2000) and secondly how to get past the Guard dog in 'Bedlam'. I am also stuck at the same point so I would appreciate some help too.

FAST and OLD. I would have Thanks for the Memory -or is your '32' really a '63'

One nice touch is that all

by Bob Hall.

"LOADING", "NO TAPE" &c. -  
 "LOADING", "NO TAPE" &c. - Your little old Dragon may have  
 "LOADING", "NO TAPE" &c. - Your little old Dragon may have disadvantages?

Well there has hidden memory: discovering whether it does shouldn't take you long, but realising the extra memory's full potential will require you to add an extra piece of 'logic' (two chips at 20p each) which plugs into the expansion port, or to make a brave five minute mod internally (cost?... only anguish). The catch is that the that's okay, but you still have extra memory (all 32k of it, if save them. The problem is you make/add the mod.) is unlikely to be perfect, though it would certainly be good enough for storing extra graphics pages, (which can be displayed without their slow speed. One answer moving them), or say tunes for 'composer' (a program I can recommend). Here are the easy steps to success:

Over all? Well apart from 1. the criticisms the unit is Have still value for money. It is an you got what it takes?  
 cassettes for those who can't The first step to answering this question is pretty straightforward -Dragon memory basically comes in two sorts- either 16 chips of 16kbits (usually 4116s) or 8 chips of nominally 32kbits each. It's these last which are often 64kbit chips which didn't quite not hesitate to phone me on make it. These two sorts of memory are controlled differentl by the SAM chip (alias 6883/741s783), and it finds out which sort it's got to control by interrogating bit2 of the PIA register at &HFF22. So:-  
 Step 1. Switch on. Type ?(PEEK(&HFF22) AND 4)

If the answer is zero you're in with a chance -if it's four tuff (if it's anything else, steady your trembling fingers and try again).

The second step is nearly as easy -we try to write information to part of the hidden memory, and read it back again. We do this by switching the SAM chips 'memory map mode' from 0 (its normal state) to mode 1, testing, then switching back again. However, when the Dragon is in mode 1 the BASIC ROM is switched out, so we must write the test routine in machine code (or FORTH) and execute it with 'interrupts' turned off. We switch to mode one by attempting to store any number at &HFFDF, and get back by attempting to store at &HFFDE (this is just like the speedup poke and is all explained in 'inside the Dragon'). Finally, until we've added the circuit mod (see part 2) we have to confine our test to memory between &HC000 and &HFFF -with nothing plugged in the expansion port. To MC enthusiasts this should be enough of a clue, but for normal mortals I give a useful routine for performing the test below. (It can also be used, without restriction on addresses, by '64' owners to move data around.)

3

Make yourself some data, by poking numbers of your choice to say &6000 on; use the routine to move them to say &HD000, (AND CHECK THAT THEY HAVN 1 MYSTERIOUSLY APPEARED AT &H5000 ON, which is what happens with a '16k+16k' memory) - then move them back to say &H7000 and cross check them. Now you should know if your Dragon really has RAM lurking above &H7FFF.

```

10 MOVIT 23-JAN-84
20 DATA 34,75
30 DATA 1A,50
40 DATA BE,00,00
50 DATA 10,BE,00,00
60 DATA B7,FF,00
70 DATA A6,80
80 DATA B7,FF,00
90 DATA A77,A0
100 DATA BC,00,00
110 DATA 2F,F1
120 DATA B7,FF,00
130 DATA 35,FF
140
150 PRINT "MOVIT HERE":PRINT"GIVE ME A HOLE TO LIVE IN";:INPUT BA
160 IF BA>300 GOTO 170 ELSE 150
170 FOR I=BA TO BA+30
180 READ V$:V=VAL("&H"+V$)
190 POKE I,V
200 NEXT I
210 PRINT"AM I IN 32K(0) OR 64K(1) MODE";:INPUT MO
220 PRINT"TAKE DATA FROM";: INPUT ST,FI
230 PRINT"IN MAP MODE";: INPUT MI
240 PRINT "AND PUT IT AT";:INPUT NA
250 PRINT"IN MAP MODE";:INPUT MF
260 IF MO=0 THEN POKE BA+28,&HDE ELSE POKE BA+28,&HDF
270 IF MI=0 THEN POKE BA+13,&HDE ELSE POKE BA+13,&HDF
280 IF MF=0 THEN POKE BA+18,&HDE ELSE POKE BA+18,&HDF
290 X=INT(ST/256):Y=ST-256*X
300 POKE BA+5,X:POKE BA+6,Y
310 X=INT(FI/256):Y=FI-256*X
320 POKE BA+22,X:POKE BA+23,Y
330 X=INT(NA/256):Y=NA-256*X
340 POKE BA+9,X:POKE BA+10,Y
350 EXEC BA

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Brainteasers for the Daragon 32  
by Pauline Hampson.

Genevieve Ludinskis book has been translated for the Dragon 32. It consists of 22 program listings for puzzles and games which should appeal to computer enthusiasts who thrive on puzzles. Some games include instructions on altering them and many would be suitable for children.

Each listing is accompanied by instructions, an explanation and a picture of what the screen should look like. Many programs have either a "High Res text writer" or "character set" in common so save these on tape to save typing. I tried several programmes myself and obtained a tape of some others.

In "Decisive Hero" you are given 8 groups of 3 numbers and have to say which groups when added together give the highest total. This has to be done before a train reaches a bridge which explodes. The screen layout was good but I would have liked some sound. The time allowed was very short but you are told how to make the game easier. It will sharpen up your addition and provide fun that will appeal to children.

"3D Brainstorm" is completely different, it is a game for two players, a sort of super noughts and crosses. Nine cubes are displayed on screen each having 3 faces of nine squares.



The computer asks you a series of questions to isolate the square you wish to choose. This is confusing at first but soon becomes clear. The object is to colour in a row or column before your opponent. I thought the game was clearly laid out and if you like noughts and crosses then this is for you.

I thought that "Detective" sounded really interesting. You have to memorise several stolen car numbers and then identify them correctly and attempt to stop them. Unfortunately although the game ran my car numbers were all fifteen digits long and not seven, and I could not track down my error. This spoilt the game for me and made the layout a bit messy.

'Odd one out' will be a favourite with the children. You are shown nine numbered shapes consisting of several coloured triangles displayed on a green background and have to spot the different one. Another similar one is 'Spot the difference'.

Children also enjoy maze puzzles and two are included 'Amazing' and 'Spiral maze'. 'Spiral' was impossible rather often and I altered it slightly. I could not get the congratulation message to appear and I extended line 1515 to read: OR X>9 AND X<31 AND Y>149 AND Y<17. Another memory game was 'Whats Yours' where you have to copy a random order for beer, lager, wine and whisky in their distinctive glasses. This would be harder if the row which you were copying was covered up and not left on the screen. I did not enjoy 'Drakes Adventure Game' which was painfully slow although the screen display was excellent.

Two musical games are included "Close Encounters" and 'Don't paint the cat'. I tried Close encounters where you have to repeat an ever increasing musical phrase to land a space ship. I could not do this at all, but as I have no ear for music I am not fit to comment! There are several other games included which I did not try, these include numerical games of different types, graphs, a robot wiring game, a western game and a whodunnit.

I have described all the bugs which I have found and I hope that there aren't any others. Most of my programming was learnt by debugging, so press on - it's good for you.

It is amazing how many of my computer friends went from Rubik's cube to computer. I think we are all of a type who like to solve puzzles (and debug games). The book provides plenty of puzzles and I found them much less boring than Space Invader and Lunar Lander programmes. They certainly do not resemble any commercial programmes that I have seen so it is worth typing them out. Those of you with children can alter and adapt the games to suit them. My daughter liked a lot of them, and most of them are educational. The book is well worth a look.

EDITEXT  
by Barry Johnson

Edittext is a fairly simple word processor written by A. Jones and S. Betts of 'Nectarine'. The program is written in Basic, (but read on!!!), and comes on tape. There are two versions of the programme on the tape; 'Edittext' for cassette operation and 'Deditext' for use with Dragon DOS. The cassette version allows the user to handle approximately four pages of text at a time, and the disc version, because of memory restrictions, allows about two pages.

The cassette filing routines are quite comprehensive, with each 'Document' being stored in two parts; the first part is a header which carries the title and the number of lines of text (that is lines of thirty one characters which is how the screen and editor handle text). The second part is the document itself, in blocks of up to 450 lines.

The disc version is, to say the least, far faster and thus easier to use...well, it would be, wouldn't it? Before the disc version can be used a special 'editext' directory is set up by following the instructions in the manual. This only takes a few seconds, then you are ready to go.

Editing is simple, and the options include:

1. Normal or justified printing.
2. Automatic wordwrap.
3. Find and Replace words and phrases.
4. Move lines and paragraphs.
5. Printer format - really easy via the menu.
6. Change typeface for the Epson FX80.

The speed of operation is fairly respectable, and for £12.95 doesn't seem bad as programmes go, although many prices have halved recently.

The only major improvement that I found it needed was an auto repeat facility for the keyboard which speeds things up considerably, (Thanks Steve!). I must admit that I've not tried using another processor, but this one seems quite reasonable to me.

(From the Editor, This edition of the Newsletter was prepared using Editext, so you can see it works - shame it hasn't a spelling checker though, I could blame all my mistakes on Nectarine.)

3  
Here's a set of EXECs for those times you want to use a command and the Dragon insists it's TM or similar

RUN	34213
CLOAD	46804 (Usually doesn't wipe programme in memory)
CSAVE	46722
LLIST	36516
TRON	39641
CIRCLE	45624
PAINT	44167
DRAW	45137
SKIFF	47134

#### BAD BYTES

This section is reserved for any problems that you may have and want to write in to us about, if we can't solve them then we'll publish the problem anyway and maybe someone else can.

Brian Morely, Coalville, Leics.

I am unable to load textfiles produced by DREAM, and is there any life at Touchmaster - they don't reply to letters.

There are two possible reasons for your DREAM problem; low output or short header. If it's the former POKE 144,3 before running the programme. For the header try POKE(Hex)745B,255 or (Hex)746B,128 (This value can be increased upto 255).

As to your second point - damned if I know, but we haven't been invited to the funeral! Anyone from Touchmaster care to comment? (I do, they don't answer my letters either -ed.)

John Niblock of Numeaton

"I had problems with the CHAIN instruction in Dragon DOS:

a) When using strings, the string contents are corrupted by chaining...this is cured with FRE\$, but its use causes program pause."

This was a fault in the Dos that dragon Data intended to cure, but they went bust first. I don't have an answer.

"b) More serious problem. When chaining several programmes her the Dragon locks up on the first instruction which contains a string or string function."

I can only assume that you're attempting to chain more programme than the Dragon has memory. Stating the obvious the Disc Drive only increases external storage. Internally the Dragon retains its normal limit.

G.D. Westerman of Bury St. Edmunds.

"How many members have an Ikon Ultra Drive, and is there any commercial software for it?

So far as we know there are three members with an Ultra Drive, and none of these list any special software. Can anyone help?

Pauline hampson, Staffs.

"The remote socket on the cassette player wears out with continual use."

The easiest solution is to solder a switch across the remote contacts in the recorder. This makes it unnecessary to remove the plug.

Dr Richard Crampton, Rotheram.

"I could use a twin Disk Drive, how do I get hold of one?"  
Search me.

And finally from Barry Johnson who supplies his own solution:

A problem that I've had recently may be of interest to some readers. My pprinter, (a Tandy LP7), wouldn't initialise properly every time it was switched on, and would often hang up during listings or protracted printing routines.

The cause of the trouble seemed to be nothing more serious than dust and cobwebs on the circuit board! Mind you it was purchased second hand, previous owner unknown, but it does go to show how some quite exasperating problems can have simple solutions.

#### CLASSIFIED

For Sale: Dan Diamond trilogy, Wings of War, Air Traffic Control, Space Shuttle, Buzzard Bait, Oasis Compiler, Sound Shaper (Shards), Johnny Reb, Ring of Darkness and Shenanigans. All half price or will swap 4 cassettes for superwriter2 cartridge, Also wanted; Dragon Machine Language for the Absolute Beginner (Melbourne House) -will swap for games or money.

Neil Scrimgeour, 125 Occupation Rd, Corby, Northants, NN17 1EG.

Neil has copies of his own games, including Combat Air Patrol for sale, but write to him about that -ed.

COMBAT AIR PATROL  
by Ashley Adamson

When you begin to load Combat Air Patrol you are presented with an excellent drawing of a fighter plane, which you cannot help but admire, it is difficult not to sit and study it as the rest of the programme loads. This is a game programme and it is written BASIC. This is not too much of a disadvantage because we are looking at a flight simulator and these are games which are not customarily played in a fast manner. Not being in machine code has probably meant that the writer has been able to include more detail. How often have you noticed that a fast moving games programme has poor background scenes simply because writing them in machine code would have been too tricky?

Back to C.A.P. and we find that once the programme is up and running we are already in mid-air, hurtling forward with our fuel level dropping. What happened to take-off, I hear you ask? Well unusually this has been bypassed. You are in the cockpit and must quickly grasp control of your craft before you get fired on by airborne enemies. To make matters worse some of the planes coming at you are friendly and not to be fired at.

If you are able to follow the instructions you might just survive an attack and then, at the very least, you will need to refuel. Refuelling is a nicely done procedure, if a little tricky. Though not, I hasten to add, as hard as landing. I never managed this but I have seen others get quite near to successful landings.

## VERDICT

Combat Air Patrol is not a game to be picked up lightly or glided over. It will require you to learn the keyboard controls before you can get anywhere. There are many neat touches, for example you will find hi-res text in some sequences of this programme. If you have not got a flight simulator then this one might be worth raising your ailerons for.

## Juniors Revenge from Touchmaster by Neil Scrimgeour

Hands up all of you who have ever played a version of Donkey Kong. Yes as I thought, A couple of million! Hands up all those who have played a version of Juniors revenge. Aha not so many. Well don't you think it's about time that Kong got his own back? You can help him with Juniors Revenge.

Using a joystick you can control Kong junior to rescue his father from the evil Clutches of Luigi. But be carefull, there are many creatures to bar the way and three different types of screens. The layout is very much like the original in that you can choose the colour set and PMODE and also that you can play in practise or game modes. The graphics are good but not amazing and it is fairly fast MC. Not a bad game though I'm dammed if I can find a price for it.

## CLUBNET

The 6809 Users Group,  
c/o Paul Hills,  
23 Woburn Road,  
Launceston,  
Cornwall,  
PL15 7HN.

In the Sussex area try:  
c/o Multisoft Systems.  
St. Martinsd,  
Orchard Road,  
Bexhill-on-Sea,  
Sussex.

The N. Down Microcomputer Group, ring Eddie Doak on 0247 450902.

Sheffield Dragon Users Group  
c/o Dr. R. Crampton,  
131 Herringthorpe Valley Road,  
Rotherham,  
S. Yorks,  
S65 3RU.

In the Peterborough area:  
Mr. A. Fairchild,  
53 Myrtle Avenue,  
Peterborough  
PE1 4LR.

Finally there's the Romsey Area Dragon Users Group, c/o Ashly Adamson, St. Elmo, Slab Lane, West Wellow, Romsey, Hants, SO5 8RG.

STOP PRESS As of now it looks as though we may have our own stand at the 6809 show, if we do then we should show the Teleprinter project and a modem; if you have anything interesting bring it along, the more the merrier. Apologies for this issue being a little scrappy, but I was literally reduced to cutting and pasteing.



3 7  
LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Well, we've made it to issue 3, and I think it's safe to say that we're reasonably safely established as THE National Group.

That doesn't mean that we've got all the members we need...we can still do with a couple of thousand more, in fact I think I can offer you a little incentive to go forth and multiply....

Thanks to Snip Software, who, like us are in the process of getting established, we have a selection of software on offer, and I'm putting up a set of four tapes to whoever can recruit the most new members before Issue Four goes to print. It's up to you, it's a good chance to help yourself and the Group at the same time!

Second point: If there's sufficient demand, I'm thinking of starting a 'HIT LIST'... (No not a list of members who sent bouncing cheques!). The idea being for you to send in brief but specific details of any legitimate complaints you have about any hardware or software firm, or magazine. Assuming they are reasonable complaints, we'll publish them, and send a copy to the relevant firm for comment/reply.

If you like the idea, and you have a complaint, write and tell me, but make sure it IS a valid one....it's no use complaining that the copy of a copy of a ripoff you got at a jumble sale won't load!

If you run a company that gets complained about.. "you need not say anything unless you wish to do so, but anything you do say will be taken down in writing and used in the next Newsletter". If you run a company and are a member...Hard luck Mate you just can't win can you!

On the subject of complaints, I've got a couple of general ones, if anyone out there feels like commenting on them.

1) Over eighty per cent of our members run some kind of disc system, yet software firms are still producing software that uses areas occupied by the DOS. WHY?... and why should we have to rewrite programmes that are usually overpriced to start with, or risk connectors by constantly having to pull the DOS?

2) What happened to the old idea that GOOD programming was that which did the job as simply as possible, using the minimum amount of memory? Personally, I'm sick of programs that use 25k to achieve an effect that could be done in 5. Ditto games that have a 10k loading screen tacked onto a 9k programme. Try checking sometime, some of the stuff on the market is ridiculous.

OK that's it for this month. By the way I'm still trying to get rid of 'DRS', if anyone wants to swap an accounts program for it, and I'm still wanting any scrap Dragon hardware for spares. (Like a 64 without a plug? -ed). Yes I know I'm rabbiting on more than usual, but I'm invoking Gaffers privilege, so you'll just have to put up with it.

Here's a letter from an ordinary mortal.

Here in the midlands we have been running an 'On the Air' club for holders of Radio Amateur Transmitting Licences, since 1.1.84, for Dragon Users, plus a few Tandy Color Users. Although there is no subscription to the club, attendance on the Net has fluctuated from an initial 15 or so to 2 or 3, but this may be due to the summer weather and other Radio Amateur Rallies usually held at the same time, i.e. Sunday Mornings. It is of course a very local event, mainly Nottingham, Derby, Loughborough Stations taking part, and not a world-wide club.

Radio amateurs are fortunate as we can not only use the Dragon for Radio teletype, morse, &c., but can pass programmes as Data with ease over the air.

There are of course many people who receive data but do not transmit, or join in, and there are many who own other machines and listen in, probably with envy.

The main difficulties are due to the membership being adults who would like to get to grips with the Dragon, but are too busy with business and family to have much time at the keyboard.

Yours Sincerely

R.A. Davis

ASCI CORNER  
by Neil Scrimgeour