

The Newsletter of the National Dragon Users Group

DRAGON



UPDATE

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The Gaffer's Bit

I suppose I ought to be using this space for a blitz on the pathetic response to the Hove show, but I really can't be bothered. Stephen says just about all that needs saying on the subject in his "on the spot" Afterthoughts piece later in this issue. However, I would like to thank all the exhibitors, who put in so much time, work and money to try and make it a good show. You all deserved a better response, and I can only apologise for the lack of interest shown by the majority of our members. To those members who turned up, thank you for trying I hope you all had a good day out and found plenty of bargains I know some of you did!!.

By the way, before you all start writing to explain that "it was too far to travel" Philippe Hennebert came over from Belgium (in the middle of his exams too!) in order to run a stand, several managed to get there from Devon and Bristol, and one even hitched all the way from Fife, so please don't bother with the excuses.

The subject is now closed. There appears to be very little happening anywhere on the computer scene at the moment. Several more (non-Dragon) user groups seem to have disappeared, there are no new developments, and the only news appears to be that there is no news at all!. I wonder how long it will be before people are asking "do you remember those computer things ...?", not much longer, by the look of it!. I can hardly wait for the next "Antiques Roadshow" series to see if anyone turns up with a Vic20 or a ZX80 for valuation.

Just been talking to Simon Jones, who asked me to apologise to his fan club for his late arrival at Hove, but his transport broke down on the way, and he had to wait until the "man who can" turned up and did!.

Well, as there's nothing to say I'll say just that and leave you to get on with the rest of this issue.

The Editor's Bit . . .

As I seem to remember saying last year, all references to the Hove show in this Update will be in the past tense, which is somewhat confusing as it hasn't actually occurred yet. Consequently, I don't know if it was a success/failure, or even if the group still exists.

But, never mind, I'm sure I'll muddle through somehow. Considering the overwhelming interest in taking over my job displayed by all you out there, you must all be madder than I originally thought. Fancy passing up the chance to work with Paul each month. Well!

Stephen.

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How to be bonkers... Stewart Orchard

ROTABB has been available for practically a year now and yet nobody seems to have spotted the joke. It was intended to be a parody; my own cynical view of computer games in general.

The whole atmosphere of ROTABB is so stupid that it defies belief. In fact, as Ian King pointed out in a recent review, the storyline is so surreal that only young children and the more literary minded of us seem to appreciate it.

Simon Harrison co-wrote the storyline with me when the game was only half-completed. His brilliant imagination and writing style coupled with my own warped and nihilistic branch of cynicism produced something that struck a near-perfect balance between parody and the surreal.

As if that wasn't enough, we went to work on the level names, satirising the likes of Manic Miner and JSW. I included "THEY HID STEWART'S MARBLES HERE" as a warning to others of my state of mind.

I don't think Simon realised how serious I was, but then no-one really suspected that I was teetering on the edge of insanity. A year on, and I'm still disturbed, probably more so. I wear shades indoors, dress in black and grey, listen to The Cure and The Sisters Of Mercy, write depressing poetry, and read Viz.

Anyway, in the middle of all this madness is a fairly conventional game. Admittedly a little more complex and scintillating than your average blast 'em up, it provides however a suitable vehicle for my comment.

That's about it, apart from thanks to all those who said nice things about my programming; and carry on subscribing to NDUG, ..(**The next bit was just a bit TOO disturbed, Stewart!..SW**).. I'm going to resubscribe as soon as I can scrape the readies together. Tara for now.

P.S. Hello Paul - you're not the only cynic around. And I fear not the most sarcastic either. Stewart Orchard.

Keep working on the cynicism & sarcasm, Stu.As Stephen will confirm, mine has to be toned down for Update or we'd run out of members!. Paul.

DOS Error Trapping(3)...Gareth Sims

Finally, all that is required is a simple routine to access the look-up table once it has been set up. DOS BASIC has provided us with the useful command ERROR GOTO, and you will need to put this at the beginning of the routine below. The routine ends with a RUN command as this, or another error, or a line number if zero, switches off any error trapping. Due to the numbering of errors reported by the ERR command, and the layout of the error look-up table, some adjustment is needed when looking up an error. If you are accessing disc files within your program, you may wish to use a LOF or LOC command either inside or outside of the error trap routine. However, my experience with these is that they can sometimes cause a ?NO ERROR which would lead to the original error not being reported. To use without DOSplus errors, remove lines 30-80 inclusive.

```
10 REM ERROR TRAP
20 E=ERR:PRINT"AN ERROR HAS OCCURRED" IN LINE";ERL;"WITH CODE";ERR
30 IF E>159 THEN E=E-68:GOTO100
40 IF E=158 THEN E=E-69:GOTO100
50 IF E>141 THEN E=E-70:GOTO100
60 IF E=141 THEN E=E-71:GOTO100
70 IF E>135 THEN E=E-72:GOTO100
80 IF E=135 THEN E=E-73:GOTO100
90 IF E>54 THEN E=E-74
100 E=E/2:FLREAD"ERROR.DAT",FROM E*64,FOR 64;A$
110 PRINT"ERROR IS:":PRINT A$
120 PRINT"FREE STRING SPACE=";FRE$:PRINT"FREE DISC SPACE=";FREE:PRINT"MEMORY=";MEM
130 TROFF:CLOSE:PRINT"PRESS ANY KEY"
140 A$=INKEY$:IF A$="" THEN 140 ELSE RUN
```

User Defining Visitext-Stephen Knight

I often have to write text for college, including technical symbols such as Greek letters, maths symbols etc. As most printers (mine included) don't have these characters, I normally have to print out each copy then write in by hand the missing symbols. If you can define printer codes to send to the printer from within your word processor with at least ten codes, then you can define your own printer characters by using the codes below to put the printer into graphics mode. If you use Visitext you can redefine the screen representation of the characters as well, so that what you see on screen comes out on paper.

For example, to define a half symbol, first work it out on a grid:

```

      1 2 3 4 5 6
128 :# : : : : :
64  :# : : : : :
32  :# :# :# : :
16  :# :# :# :# :
8   :# :# :# :# :
4   :# :# :# :# :
2   :# :# :# :# :
----- base of normal characters
1 : : : : : :
2
2 1 3 4 1 0
4 8 8 2 8 0

```

Then to find the number for a particular column, add the numbers in the left column up wherever there is a dot in that column, and leave them out if there is no dot, e.g. row 1 is $128 + 64 + 32 = 224$. Column 6 should be left blank as a gap between the characters, unless you want them to join with each other, e.g. arrows, box lines.

For EPSON compatibles, send the codes 27 75 6 0 followed by the data worked out above to the printer, which will print the half symbol. These codes switch the printer to graphics mode, and then send the graphics data for 6 dot columns in single density mode. The width of a character printed like this is exactly the same as a normal print character, and so it doesn't look too odd when printed in a page of text, if you are using the normal draft mode of the printer.

Some examples:

```

Pi      27 75 6 0 38 56 32 60 34 0.
Alpha   27 75 6 0 28 34 34 28 34 0.
Sigma   27 75 6 0 198 170 146 130 108 0.
<-      27 75 6 0 0 16 40 108 170 40.
->      27 75 6 0 40 170 108 40 16 0.
Half    27 75 6 0 224 18 38 42 18 0.
Root    27 75 6 0 4 2 252 128 128 0.
Mew     27 75 6 0 3 60 2 2 62 0.
Omega   27 75 6 0 28 34 12 34 28 0.

```

Not so easy...

Apparently, the April edition of Update carried some errors in the Easy Machine Code Piece, which would have prevented the program from working. In line 70, an extra " was inserted after the second \$60 which should not have been there, and in line 110, it should read LDY #@DATA. Without the #, it is interpreted as Extended instead of immediate. Thanks to Raymond Roach for pointing out the mistakes.
Stephen.

PEEKING THE DRAGON (26) BY MIKE STOTT

Unfortunately, yet again, I have no news whatsoever concerning new software for the Dragon. I have not even been contacted by any of the Companies since Ossett so I am not able to pass on any information about any forthcoming releases. The post from users has kept me fairly busy. One letter from Antigua was dealt with by Paul. I have got Dave Cadman to thank for help regarding Radio Ham software in response to a query from Ontario, Canada. Nearer home I have received a letter from Graham Kinns who gave me his review of "Hitch-hiker's Guide To The Galaxy" at Ossett. He writes to try and clarify the situation regarding this program as it is only guaranteed to work on V1.0 Dos. In his letter he says it will only run on a D64, upgraded D32 or one of the few D32s with 64K chips. He says the supplied disk will run with V1.0 or SuperDos. However, there are several different versions of SuperDos and Graham does not say which one he has tried. For other Doses a patch can be built into the initial BOOT routine. You need to know the address of the routine which reads a sector in to memory at the address specified in \$EE:\$EF, the track set up in location \$EC and the sector in \$ED. For SuperDos this routine is at \$C104. The patch is as follows:

```
10 CLEAR 1000: SREAD 1,0,15,A$,B$
20 MID$(A$,19,2)=CHR$(&Hxx)+CHR$(&Hyy)
30 SWRITE 1,0,15,A$,B$:CLOSE
```

where xxyy is the hex address of the routine. It is recommended to try this patch on a backup copy just for safety. With regard to obtaining the footnotes which are mentioned in the game - just type FOOTNOTE 14 or whatever at the cursor prompt and you will get further information.

My next letter is from Dennis Wright of Derby who goes to Ossett each year. He thanks me for my help at Ossett this year and tells me that the software he purchased works well on a D32. A letter like this is appreciated as I will be certain of the answer next time somebody asks me the same question. Thanks, Dennis. While there his two sons gave Stuart Beardwood some software they had written for the PD library. Given some encouragement we will have new software writers on the Dragon scene in the very near future. Stuart has got quite a few programs now for his library but is always looking for more. If anybody would like to write a review on anything in the PD library please send it to me and I will see that it is published in Update..

Joe Brincat of Malta has sent me a copy of the maps of Universe 1 and Galaxy 1 of Universe 2 for Total Eclipse which he tells me Pulser have re-issued on disk. I cannot comment as Brian O'Connor has not said anything to me about this. Joe is willing to help anybody with T.E. Universe 1. In reply to Joe's comment in his letter that I am also "Fishy Business Dudley" - Do I look like a goldfish? No, we are two different people, honestly. It takes me all my time to fill one page each month without trying to fill even more.

Joe has just started mapping Rally and complains that little has been written about it in Update. Read Peeking The Dragon (5) in August 1988 when I reviewed it within my article. Cannot start the car? First, remember nothing is for free in this world. Then you must imagine you are in a real car and carry out every action that you would normally do.

His final subject is READPC, written by Martin Vermeer, with which Basic PC disks can be read and run on a Dragon. Have any of our members used this program as Stuart Beardwood, especially, would like to hear from you. I hope to obtain a copy of it in the near future and will try using it in conjunction with my Tandy 1000 but it will probably take a while for me to get into it so if anybody has any experience with it can they contact either myself or Stuart. I hope that someone somewhere will decide to release some software before Paul decides to make me redundant. Seriously, it would make writing this article much easier if there was some software to write about. Maybe next month.

The Great Computape Mystery!.

OK, own up, which of you kidnapped Computape?!. They were supposed to be at the Hove Show, but somewhere between our phone conversation and the actual show they managed to disappear completely, leaving us with a dent in the takings and an empty stand. Will anyone with any information please keep it to themselves as I don't want to know about firms who are too damned tight fisted to phone and let me know if they can't keep arrangements!. Paul.

Hung Up On Dreams... Tony Clarke

I have finally been pushed into attempting a contribution to Mr. Grade's august journal, not due to his repeated requests which I have read guiltily for two years, but by recent news and reminiscence.

Other authors in this newsletter and other Dragon magazines have been looking back to the launch of the Dragon and the Dragon Professional and hoping for a resurgence in the form of the CoCo III or Dragon Tangent. History is all very well, but it is there to be learnt from, not repeated. The only mass market for 6809 based computers in the English speaking world was that of the CoCo I and Dragon 32, not quite identical twins. The vast majority of computer users wish to conform; to be part of the new mass market - they are not hobbyists.

"But look at the facilities that can be offered," an enthusiast may say: "look at OS9." It is not enough! A bit of personal history may show why. When I decided to buy a personal computer, I did my research, read reviews etc, and ended up going out to buy a Dragon - not the best but the best compromise. They were sold out so I bought a Lynx - a very good computer! Five years later, I bought the Dragon (1988), Delta disks, and Flex, but I kept the Lynx, which was now a 128K CP/M machine. I was an obsolete-computer junkie. But I had read a lot of reviews back then, and mention of Dragon developments sent me back to check just what had been available between 1982 and '84.

Systems based on the 680x processors were not common but included home build and development systems such as the SWIPC and Windrush, business systems from Mini Man and Seed, and some that could have made it in the home market. The Dragon and CoCo succeeded but four other models hardly reached the marketplace.

Japan, before MSX, presented the Fujitsu FM7 and FM8 and the Hitachi 6809, while Britain was represented by the Positron 9000. Stirling Microsystems sold the Fujitsu models for a while, but the Hitachi only appeared as a review machine. The Positron system was aimed at business and included OS9 and massive memory expansion options, but its colour graphics could have found it a wider market. For Fujitsu, Flex was an option, as was CP/M, using the third processor.

Yes, you read it right, third processor. The full blown FM8 offered two 6809s and a Z80, 640x240 bit mapped colour graphics, bubble memory, ROM BASIC, sound, Flex, and CP/M. A real dream machine. The reviews said so too, but people bought Spectrums, BBC Bs, and Dragons, even Lynxs. Imports stopped. Positron changed over to consultancy, though they still maintain their business systems. A Fujitsu dealer 'phoned me up to ask what this FM7 I was advertising for was.

What's the point of all this rambling? Good systems, better in some cases than anything upwardly compatible with a Dragon, failed when competition, though plentiful, was poor, and fortunes could be made. The mass market now is for 16-bit machines, if not IBM compatible then 68000 based. The Sam Coupe has shown that 8-bit machines can deliver the features the customer expects, but the 6809 user base does not have the buying power of the Spectrum market.

We obsolete-computer junkies can continue to refine and develop our systems, they do what the home user needs and they are fun. But novelty and status sells home computers, together with a certain conformity. I stick with what I've got because I've already been upstaged. A new super-chip, a new blitter cannot further devalue my systems. However, any new product must sell to customers that regard the Dragon as rock-bottom, and so the Dragon name could well be a millstone round the neck of any entrepreneur.

All depressing stuff, I hope it provokes a few rebuttals in print, of course.

Now, does anyone know where I can get a Fujitsu FM8, it's been my dream machine for seven years. ### No rebuttals, no disagreements, although I should mention that the "Tangent" exists only as a paper project. By the way, are you seriously saying that you LIKE CP/M?!!!!!! (If so, make me an offer for my old Franklin "Apple2+" clone!). Paul.

Hove Show details.

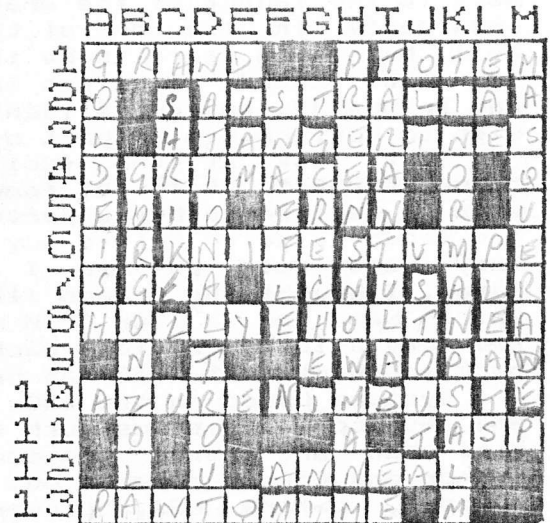
Just in case you're interested, we made a loss on the show itself, and a profit on the Group stand, so overall we came out ahead. Just two exhibitors failed to arrive, Greenweld, who had transport failure en route, and Computape who couldn't even be bothered to let us know what happened or why. Roughly 120 of our "enthusiasts" attended, and I'd like to thank all of them for making the effort... I hope they all got bargains. The rest were too damned idle, complacent, or apathetic to attend, so the Group will NOT be organizing ANY further events of ANY kind. Paul G.

CROSSWORD NUMBER 53.

ACROSS: 1A&D1, Famous horse race around Easter time. 1I, Type of pole revered by Indians. 2D, Country where lawbreakers were shipped many years ago. 3D, Natives of Tangires. 4B, Distortion of the face to express dislike, contempt, etc. 6C, Cutting instrument. 6H, A piece of tree left in the ground will puzzle you. 8A, Evergreen shrub with red berries. 8G, Otter's den. 9K, Found on a dog's foot. 10A, Sky blue. 10F, Rain cloud having no particular form. 11K, Small Egyptian poisonous snake. 12F, To soften by heating then cooling slowly. 13A, Christmas play.

DOWN: A1, Type of Chinese carp as in Dudley!. 84, Italian ewe milk cheese. C2, Common name for Butcher Bird. D1, See 1A. D9, Common fish. F2, To steal (horses bridle). G4, Public nursery for children of working parents. H1, A bird does this to its feathers with its beak. H6, Figure built by children during winter. I1, Large, hairy venomous spider. J7, Strong, robust beer, perhaps. K3, Mr. Wisdom could be a native of Normandy. K9, Sacred song or hymn. L6, Flattened folds or creases found in some trouser fronts. M1, Ball where masks (CLUE) and other disguises are worn.

As usual, the first all correct entry will get a choice of programs from the current Dragonfire Services list (generously donated by Robin Hemmings), and the second all correct gets a tape from our "prize collection". All entries to Paul Grade.



Type it in and see!.

0 PCLEAR8:60SUB11

1 IF Y<31 THEN PUT(X+8,174)-(X+36,186),E,PSET ELSE IF Y<61 THEN PUT(X+6,173)-(X+38,181),F,PSET ELSE IF Y<91 THEN PUT(X+1,172)-(X+40,188),G,PSET ELSE IF Y<121 THEN PUT(X+6,171)-(X+42,189),H,PSET ELSE IF Y<129 THEN PUT(X+6,171)-(X+42,189),I,PSET

2 IF Y1=2 AND (Y=129 OR Y=130) THEN PUT(X+6-X1,171)-(X+42-X1,189),J,PSET

3 IF N=F THEN PUT(X,Y)-(X+E,Y+E),A,PSET ELSE IF N=G THEN PUT(X,Y)-(X+E,Y+E),B,PSET ELSE IF N=H THEN PUT(X,Y)-(X+E,Y+E),C,PSET ELSE PUT(X,Y)-(X+E,Y+E),D,PSET

4 X=X+X1:Y=Y+Y1:IF X>J THEN X1=X1*K:M=M*K:X=J ELSE IF X<F THEN X1=X1*K:M=M*K:X=F

5 IF Y<F THEN Y1=Y1*K:Y=F ELSE IF Y>L THEN Y1=Y1*K:Y=L

6 IF M=F THEN N=N+F:IF N=P THEN N=F

7 IF M=K THEN N=N-F:IF N=O THEN N=I

8 GOTO1

9 PCLS:CIRCLE(128,96),20:LINE(128,76)-(128,116),PSET:CIRCLE(128,96),8,,2.5:CIRCLE(128,96),16,,1.25:RETURN

10 PCLS:CIRCLE(128,96),20:CIRCLE(128,96),6,,3.333:CIRCLE(128,96),14,,1.43:RETURN

11 CLS:PRINT @232,"PLEASE WAIT...":PMODE4,2:COLOR0,5:DIMA(7,7),B(7,7),C(7,7),D(7,7),E(2,3),F(3,3),G(3,3),H(4,3),I(5,3),J(5,3):60SUB9:PAINT(126,96):PAINT(109,96):PAINT(138,96):GET(106,74)-(150,118),A,G:60SUB10:PAINT(136,96):PAINT(120,96)

12 GET(106,74)-(150,118),B,G:60SUB9:PAINT(130,96):PAINT(145,96):PAINT(118,96):GET(106,74)-(150,118),C,G:60SUB10:PAINT(128,96):PAINT(146,96):PAINT(110,96):GET(106,74)-(150,118),D,G

13 X=50:Y=1:X1=2:Y1=2:N=1:M=-1:E=44:F=1:G=2:H=3:I=4:J=210:K=-1:L=146:O=0:P=5:Q=5:7=132:U=20:V=147:W=14:Z=190:A1=187:B1=22:C1=133

14 ZZ=10:60SUB16:GET(114,90)-(142,102),E,G:ZZ=12:60SUB16:GET(112,89)-(144,103),F,G:ZZ=14:60SUB16:GET(110,88)-(146,104),G,G:ZZ=16:60SUB16:GET(108,87)-(148,105),H,G:ZZ=18:60SUB16:GET(106,87)-(148,105),I,G

15 PCLS:GET(0,171)-(42,189),J,G:LINE(0,0)-(255,191),PSET,B:SCREEN1,1:RETURN

16 PCLS:CIRCLE(128,96),ZZ,,.5:PAINT(128,96):RETURN

IF...THEN...ELSE (1) - J.M. Winchurh

These short articles, like the FOR...NEXT series, are aimed at the learner, and make no concessions to the more advanced programmer. A number of worked examples will be included, and these will be examined, line by line where necessary, in order that the path that the program is taking is clear to the reader.

The most basic program is the "straight line" program, such as one to convert inches to millimetres, and of course output to the screen or printer. This type of program starts at the beginning and ploughs on until it reaches the end, with no deviations. p

This can be limiting, and it is much more powerful if you, or the program, are able to make decisions as to what course you should take if a particular situation arises. Such a decision might be "if such-and-such is true, then do so-and-so." The key words being IF and THEN. In more formal language, this could be written:-

IF the test is true THEN perform some action
Such a test might be "If A is greater than B then GOTO X", where A and B are numerical values, and X the number of a line in the program.

Using letters (strings) it could read: If A\$="A" then GOTO X. In both cases, line X would contain the ACTION that you require to be taken IF the statement is true. If the statement is NOT true, the action will not be carried out. Thus:

```
IF A=B THEN GOTO X      (In each case this must
or IF A<B THEN GOTO X   be "true" for the action
or IF A$<>"C" THEN GOTO X to be performed at line X)
```

If it is not true the program will simply move on to the next line in "straight line" fashion. Here is a very simple program to illustrate this:

```
10 CLS
20 PRINT"ENTER A NUMBER BETWEEN 1 AND 9"
30 INPUT A
40 PRINT"ENTER ANOTHER NUMBER BETWEEN 1 AND 9"
50 INPUT B
60 CLS:REM tidies up the screen
70 IF A<B THEN GOTO 90
80 END:REM needed to stop the program from carrying on regardless of
    the IF...THEN in line 70 and printing A
90 PRINT A
```

Lines 20-50 should be obvious. Line 70 is the decision maker. Note line 80.

On the basis of this program, design others to test whether A=B, A>B, or A=>B, remembering to print A ONLY when the IF...THEN statement is true. Next time we will look at slightly more complex programs, and the extension ELSE.

Help Wanted URGENT! .

My D32 displays no startup message at switch on, just a couple of @@ symbols in inverse video at the top left. Pressing RESET occasionally flashes a graphics pattern which appears to be graphics characters, filling the screen. Suggestions regarding cause and cure urgently required!.

Peter Brent. 14, Stagelands, Crawley. RH11-7PE. (0293-32825).

%% Try dry joints, dirty switch contacts or main board, dud ROM, or possibly 6809E. Paul.

The End Of Fishy Business (for now)...

Well, this is it, the moment you've been dreading for the last year. Yes, it's time to say goodbye. Sadly, due to the copious amounts of A level revision, this will be the last 'Fishy Business' for a while. But before you throw yourself into a black pit of despair, there is good news. I'll probably be back in a couple of months when life's a bit easier. Of course, that doesn't mean you can stop writing to me. It'd be nice to start again with an article dedicated to readers' letters (fat chance...). Anyway, one person was kind enough to respond to my ideas about a games directory. Yes, stand up Gavin Seagers! Anybody else who's interested should contact me. It's dead easy, just get an envelope (look it up in the dictionary if you don't understand the nature of this advanced piece of postal technology), write to 'His magnificence Dudley the Incredible Gamesplaying Goldfish (XXI think 'Dudley' will suffice...SWXX), The Vicarage, Norwich Road, Watton, Thetford, Norfolk, IP25 6DB', stick on a stamp (you know, the things with a picture of our beloved Queen on), and pop it in a postbox (big red things with a slot in the top...ermmm). Easy when you know how, isn't it.

But did Gavin just send a letter? No he did not. This wonderful human being also enclosed the following cheat for Jet Set Willy, giving infinite lives:

```
10 REM INFINITE LIVES:EXEC171 TO RUN
20 READM:POKEX+171,M:X=X+1:IF X<15 THEN 20
30 DATA 16,206,0,255,189,160,146,134,125,183,43,8,126,9,9
```

Run the program then enter EXEC 171. The game will load, and run with infinite lives. But beware of endless death loops if you die at a monster start position.

Well kids, it looks like it's time for the reviews...

	G	S	P	D	Overall	
ROTABB	9	7	9	8	9	***P.P.P.***
CHUCKY EGG	6	6	8	8	7	
BEANSTALKER	5	6	8	8	7	
AIRBALL	9	8	7	7	8	
3D SEIDABB ATTACK	4	3	4	2	3	

Time for me to swim off into the sunset, then, ready to take on whatever the evil forces of the Cambridge Examination board can throw at me. See y'all when I return. And don't forget the letters, especially about the games directory. By the way, any rumours about the existence of Mad Fish diseases are completely untrue. So, remember to lock up your geraniums every Tuesday, fnak chugga chugga wheeeee!

(This comment was topical on 23/5/90 at 10 p.m., honest...)

Dudley.

(XXStill moderately topical on 27/05/90 at 8.08 p.m....SWXX)

Dudley will return...

Disclaimer...

Just to back Mike up in Peeking 26 this month, Dudley the Incredible etc and our esteemed Software Editor are two entirely different people. For a start, Dudley (real name XXCENSOREDXX) is currently doing/recovering from his 'A' levels, whilst Mike has been at work for many years.

The most obvious giveaway, though, is that Mike lives in Prescot, Merseyside, whilst Dudley's bowl resides in Norfolk! It can't have been that difficult to work out that they are two different people, surely?!?! Stephen.

North East Dragon Users' Club

During the past year the club membership has increased by 4 members. It now stands at 18, with average attendances of 9. There have been some surprisingly high turnouts, even at business meetings, but this may be due to the "surprise" element introduced this year. Such attendances are good, considering the work and educational commitments of members. There have been adverts placed to attract new members, as well as attempts to contact local Dragon owners through the Dragon Directory.

The topics covered during the year included Electronic Author, Communication via a Psion, light pen, screen dumps, Eprom programming, graph pad, and Wefax (if only we had a decent radio). Two series are currently running, machine code and competitions. There have been demonstrations of a CAD system running on an OSICOM and the Apple Mac. Guests have been invited to demonstrate both the Amiga and Atari systems. In October 1989, members and their guests (38 in total) visited the local BBC TV and radio station. Plans are being made to tour Cameron's Brewery in the autumn of 1990 (well...they might have a Dragon).

The club subscribes to the OS9 User Group, a disc based magazine. Members have reviewed programs on behalf of Dragon Update, and have had their reviews published. The club has been mentioned in various publications over the year.

Members have attended a number of shows this year, as far away as Hove and Weston (so stop harassing me, Paul), and have expanded their systems mainly with the addition of drives.

Overall, the year has been quite succesful considering the shrinking Dragon community. A number of the membership own or have the use of a second computer system in addition to their Dragon, but it is hoped that they will continue to support the group during 1990/1991.

Chris Jobson.

Tape to Disc...R.A.D.

If, like myself, you have used a cassette based system for years, but now find yourself the proud owner of a disc drive, you may be puzzled by the problems which can arise when copying your tapes to disc. If so, these tips may help you. This is NOT an article on copying commercial software from tape to disc. If it's available on disc my advise is to purchase the disc.

The main problems you will face arise from the drop in memory available, from 24871 to 23335 with DOS, and the change of the screen addresses, from 1536 to 13823 (tape) to 3072 to 15360 (disc). If the program is text only, without using any graphics pages, and you find that you get an ?OM ERROR (out of memory) with DOS, this can sometimes be remedied by making the first line of your program PCLCAR1, releasing the unused graphics pages for BASIC if not already done. In other cases, if there are instructions included within the program, these can be deleted and made into a separate program on the same disc, to be loaded and read on their own. If the program uses graphics, the system will normally take care of the POMDES, and no adjustment on your part is needed. However, graphics pages saved to tape at the old tape addresses would need to be loaded for DOS with an offset of 1536, i.e. CLOAD "SCREEN", 1536 from tape and SAVE "SCREEN.BIN", 3072, 9216, 3072 for a PMODE3 or 4 graphics screen. Some BASIC programs using graphics may POKE data onto the screen. If the addresses are on page 1 (1536-3071), and you happen to CLOAD and RUN this program from tape to a DOS system, you will probably find corrupt DOS hooks on that page, now used for DOS. You will have to find the lines where the POKES occur, before RUNNING it, and add 1536 to the addresses so POKEd. Then you can RUN it and SAVE it without corruption. An example of this is the excellent Pontoon program in INPUT magazine, where the offending line is line 50. Should you wish to make such a program run either from tape or disc, you would need to detect the presence of DOS. This can be done by PEEKing address 1543. If DOS is in situ, this will read 32; so IF PEEK(1543)=32 THEN (don't do next line but jump over it to the line which handles the DOS address instead). Finally, there are several DISCOFF and DISKILL routines floating around in Dragon circles. Some are better than others and give a full 24871 bytes free. Some require you to press RESET to get this, others only give the 23335 bytes already available. By having one of the better ones on the same disc, you can add a first line to your program - RUN "DISKILL.BIN" - to get all the free bytes before carrying on with the rest of the BASIC.

EASY MACHINE CODE (13) R.A.DAVIS

Scanning the joysticks requires a jump to 32786 (\$8012), which returns the stick value in locations 346 to 349, 346 gives the X coordinate of the right stick, 347 the Y coordinate and 348 & 349 the X & Y coordinates for the left stick. These values are numbers between 0 and 63, here is a short Basic listing to illustrate:-

```
10 CLS
20 EXEC 32786
30 PRINT @ 32, PEEK(346)
40 PRINT @ 64, PEEK(347)
50 PRINT @ 96, PEEK(348)
60 PRINT @ 128, PEEK(349)
70 GOTO 20
```

This loop continually scans the joysticks and you will see the values change as you move the sticks. Each time the routine at 32786 is executed the values found are left at 346 to 349. It is therefore quite easy for you to write a machine code routine to read the sticks..... JSR 32786 ... LDA 346 ... CMPA with previous value stored or with 63/2 = 31 to find out whether to move to the right or left on screen, and if so jump to the appropriate subroutine to move. Then LDA 347 and do the same, then 348 and 349. Having done that and made any moves needed you return to your main routine until another loop is needed. If you are only using one joystick then you only need to look at locations 346 & 347 or 348 & 349, depending on which one you use. To examine the fire buttons you need to look at location 65280 which will return 252 if both buttons are pressed and 253 or 254 for the two joysticks. If none are pressed it will return 255. You can load the A register from 65280 and make the required CMPA to check the button(s). Try this:-

```
10 PRINT PEEK(65280)
20 GOTO 10
```

You'll probably get a few 191s until it settles down to 255, then press each button in turn, then both together.

Afterthoughts 70...

Well...where the bloody hell are you all???? It's now 12.22pm, and the hall here at Hove is virtually EMPTY!! What's the excuse this time? Why Paul, or the other exhibitors, bother to put on a show is beyond me, when 99% don't make the effort to turn up! You all KNEW that this would be the last big show which the group is running - you all KNEW that the Dragon companies would be here - you all KNEW that they need your support. But you stay away in droves. Still, that's your problem.

The group has done all it can to bring the Dragon scene together here at Hove, but judging by the appalling turnout, the majority of you don't care about it anymore! It's out of my hands. I can't force you to turn up. But you can't blame me, or anyone else, when the Dragon scene finally collapses. I will be VERY surprised if there are any Dragon companies left after today.

You all knew where and when it was. Write your own obituary.

It's now half-one. We're almost 200 down on last year's turnout, and it's a complete shambles. It's game over as far as I'm concerned. If you can't be bothered to turn up, you don't deserve to have group members putting in hard work for you.

I would, however, like to thank the people who HAVE turned up, and have had a chat here at the group stand. At least some people make the effort. @@ It's now after 3 pm, there are about five punters left, and Paul is NOT happy. Why? Because NO-ONE TURNED UP!!! As far as I can see, the group can do no more. Sound your own death knell if you like; Hove 1990 will be remembered for its catastrophic, rather than positive, effects on the Dragon scene. We've done all we can. It's now up to you, and, judging by the turnout here today, the rest of you couldn't give a sod.

So why should I?
Stephen. Hove. 2/6/90.

I don't think there's anything I can add to Stephen's comments, except that I agree with them 100%. You were warned, you've ignored the warning, so when things finally fold and YOU'RE left with zero support you've no-one to blame but yourselves. Just remember that it was entirely YOUR choice. Paul.



Yet another correction!.

I'm told that we had an error in the "Mandelbrot" listing in the February 1990 issue, and that LINE 6 should read:-

X=D+N*G: Y=E+M*G: A=0: B=A: C=A

Letter from Malcolm Cowen.

A Mr. Bob Green of London has been on touch with a Group member about Bulgaria. He has family contacts there, in particular one lad who has a Dragon but no information about it, and not much software.

We have provided him with a manual, but the need is greater than just that. The old system has left them with nothing, and ANY computer hardware or software would be treated like gold dust!. If anyone has anything they can contribute, then please write to me, Malcolm Cowen, at 23, Bristol Avenue, Levenshulme, Manchester M19-3NU. or phone 061-225-4674.

The greatest need is for serious software and hardware, to help them to catch up with the new technology that has become commonplace for us. It is not just a matter of charity. The best means of guaranteeing that we don't have another European punchup like the last one is to make sure that we have free and developed friendly nations for neighbours. Computer technology is part of that as it gives individuals power to organise against a stropky government. So think, have you got owt Bob could use?. M.C.

%% While I'm not sure I can agree with the last para of Malcolm's letter (computers tend to provide stropky government with MORE power to clobber the individual!), I most certainly agree with the rest, so please help if you can. Paul G.

Letter from Bill Saxelby.

I was finally able to make the journey to Ossett last month, my first ever visit to a Dragon Show!. I was allowed to go subject to taking along a "minder" (my Daughter!). It seems that at 72 I should not be embarking on such adventurous journeys!.

The Ossett show made me realise how much I have missed in the past. Visiting the individual stalls I was able to meet people who were previously just names on letters. To mention a few, Brian O'Conner, Mike Stott, and Bob Preston. One fact I had not expected was the (to me!) tender years of the experts manning the displays. I do not know if the attendance was up to standard, but there seems to still be a great interest in Dragon matters, judging by the numbers buying software and hardware. I came away with an assortment of books and discs!.

Altogether a most enjoyable visit which I very much hope I may be able to repeat next year. W.A.S.

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The Late, Late Bit

As I was saying earlier, if there's anything new happening on the computer scene it is a VERY well kept secret, which makes it difficult to find anything to write about!.

There IS one rather odd thing though, that is turning up with increasing frequency now, and if anyone can explain it I'd be very interested. More and more of our "under 20's" keep telling me that they are having to give up computing, attending shows etc, because they "don't have time owing to exam work". Leaving aside the fact that all examination standards are so low now that a mentally retarded monkey should be able to get a pass grade, I thought the idea of examinations was to assess what had already been learned, NOT what data could be crammed into a few weeks immediately preceeding the exam. Surely if you have learned a subject properly you don't NEED to do extra work for an examination?. If you DO need the extra work, then you don't know the subject anyway, so any examination result is worthless?. I could never see the point in the damned things anyway some of the thickest people I know have BA degrees, and some of the "qualified engineers" aren't fit to be trusted with a Lego set but maybe those are the ones who "had to do extra work for exams"?????!

Oh well, I suppose one day it will be fashionable again for ability to count for more than pretty pieces of worthless paper, but not while people are so gullible.

On the subject of "thickness", I've just received a threatening letter from our local Department of Morons informing me that a vehicle registered in my name was reported for being parked without a valid Tax Disc at the begining of January this year, and threatening all kinds of penalties if I don't give them all the relevant information. Of course, it completely escaped their notice that I didn't purchase the thing until the end of April (even though they must have got MY details from DVLC). I think I'll remind them that making false and malicious accusations is also an offence, and enquire whether the letter was sent as result of incompetence or negligence. Yes, all these highly qualified staff, and all this "state of the art computer technology" really demonstrate their true worth in this kind of situation!. Roll on Lo-Tech and unqualified staffing!!.

And on the subject of vehicles and morons, do you think the Conservation types (the Greener than Green ones) will eventually discover that the average person produces more carbon dioxide in a day than the average car engine? they never seem to bother about little details like that, do they?. It's a bit like the figures that keep getting quoted about the number of cars on the road, no one ever takes into account that well over half of them haven't existed for years except on paper as DVLC keeps them "on the books" until the log books are returned marked "scrapped" which usually never happens!. Still, we MUST believe all the "Experts", mustn't we?, after all, they're "properly qualified"!!.

What's all this got to do with computers?, nothing at all really, except that it is still fashionable to imagine that "computers", "experts", and "scientists" (whatever that is supposed to signify) somehow are infallible and know all about everything, whereas all three are generally useless, know nothing much about anything, and usually put out vast quantities of total garbage. Of course, they aren't alone in latter fault, I've been putting out vast quantities of garbage (crudely disguised as a newsletter) for years!, but then why should THEY have all the fun?!

Oh well, I suppose that ought to be enough to fill the page Don't forget, Help protect the Environment ... Stop Breathing!, and when writing to your M.P make sure you write on recycled Andrex!. More recycled garbage next month. Paul.

Paul G.

A choice of words

Program: *Editext*
Supplier: R & A J Preston,
 Kings Hall Court, St. Brides
 Major, Mid Glamorgan.
Price: £6.95

PRESTONS are continuing to produce re-runs of good software and breathe new life into them by halving the cost of the package. *Editext* is their latest offering, being originally produced by Nectarine at £12.95. Please do not dismiss this program on the basis that at £6.95 it cannot be any good, quite the contrary! *Editext* is a versatile word processor providing most of the facilities found in very much more expensive word processors, and can be operated via disc or cassette. The disc version is called *Deditext*, and is on the reverse of the tape. The main features allow normal or justified printing, automatic wordwrap, and include full editing facilities. The latter are fairly comprehensive, enabling letter, word or combination of words to be added, deleted or changed. There is even a Find and Replace routine which couples the Move Lines and Paragraphs to anywhere in the text, and makes form design, or standard letters requiring customisation, very easy.

Additionally, the program allows upper and lower case printing to any required typewidth, print formatting to include multiple top copies, and various typefaces.

The standard choice of print fonts is:

a) Elite (12 characters per inch, enabling more text to be printed in a given line width).

b) Double print (prints the line in two passes of the head, minutely advancing the paper, thickening the dots to achieve a higher print quality).

c) Emphasised print (each dot is printed twice to produce the effect of bold type).

d) Enlarged print (gives the impression of double-height characters printed in bold type - very useful for headings and title pages).

e) Condensed print (prints 16.5 characters to the inch, compared with the normal 10 characters to the inch, or 12 using Elite type - very useful for half-sized documents and wide tabulated data).

You can of course mix typefaces if required by printing the document in sections, using the Change Type Face menu incorporated into the program, which will also automatically revert to the normal Pica type.

Once you are satisfied with the layout and content of the actual print fonts you can then execute a draft print which prints out the text line by line as it is stored in the Dragon's memory. Each of the lines is numbered and all carriage returns are marked. When you have completed your draft print or even if you did not require it at all, you can enter the Formatted Print routine which enables you to format the text for printing to virtually any typewidth up to the maximum allowed by your printer, and with any desired number of lines per page. The text can be justified, margins altered, and line spacing adjusted. Of course, if you wish to save the text to tape or disc there is a very useful facility for doing so, which incorporates a special header file, identifying the text, into the filing routine.

The instructions for the operating of *Editext* are clear, concise and simple and also contain a prompt chart to assist you in your early running of the program. As if all this were not enough, there is even a short appendix outlining examples of how to save time using the facilities overall.

Suffice to say this program is very adaptable, easy to use and given all the facilities it contains, at £6.95 it must rate as one of the best buys of the year, and receives my wholehearted endorsement.

R L N Hewson



The ball rolls again

Program: *Rolaball*
Supplier: R & A J Preston,
 Kings Hall Court, St. Brides
 Major, Mid Glamorgan.
Price: (cassette) £10.95.
 THIS is not a review of the same piece of software that has been reviewed before in *Dragon User*. As yet I do not even know if it will replace the original *Rolaball* or be called *Rolaball2* or whatever.

When I first received *Rolaball* for review from Helen many moons ago I was delighted as I had seen the game, before it was finished, at the Ossett Show in 1987. After many attempts at loading it I eventually got it to work only to find that my fingers were not nimble enough to work the keyboard. Having accessed the cheat screen (hands up those of you who don't know it's there) I set the colours to red and green and also stopped the cubes moving around. This made the task of getting around the screen much easier. Then I set about mapping the 49 screens while my youngest son David took over on the keyboard.

Disaster struck in the form of an unmentionable and I was still experiencing loading problems from the cassette. Having contacted the author, Jonathan Cartwright, I was sent a disc version, but came upon the same unmentionable. After several phone calls to Jonathan, he eventually agreed with me that I was right although we both agreed that probably nobody would be able to get that far playing the game normally. Now I have received the updated version and this is what the original should have been.

To those of you who do not know the game at all I will give you a brief description. You guide a ball along a 3D landscape collecting 49 jigsaw pieces which form a picture in the top left hand corner of the screen as you pick them up. To move from one screen to another you select your exit, move on to it and press the appropriate key. At the start of the later version you are presented with a menu from which you can define your own keys for

the directions, picking up etc. and this is a definite advantage over the original. There is no joystick option in either version of *Rolaball*, and this is because the ball moves over some narrow scenery and it would be even more difficult than using the keyboard. You can also select the colour set and the speed of play also improvements on the original.

The scenery in this version is slightly different to the original and a score of 100 points is now awarded for each jigsaw piece collected, whereas there was no score feature in the original game. At first I kept getting caught by the enemy cube as I arrived on a new screen but if you watch closely you might discover how to avoid this. Several of the jigsaw pieces appear to be impossible to collect at first but a little imagination and experimentation should help you to get them all. One piece in particular is very difficult to see but I can assure you that it is there. When (or rather if) you have collected the 49 pieces and the jigsaw is complete the flying saucer appears overhead and the ball rises into it.

There is the usual Cartwright musical accompaniment and an unusual method of clearing the screen which I really enjoyed. I must thank my son David once again for doing most of the work. To sum up I found it to be a challenging game which has been greatly improved from the original.

If I had not seen the game so long ago I would probably have thought that Jonathan had taken parts of *Marble Madness* and *Airball* and put them together to make one game. I think that this is now a very good game, albeit very difficult to get very far into, let alone complete, unless you can find the pokes for unlimited lives or for stopping the cubes moving about.

Mike Stott

