

The Newsletter of the National Dragon Users Group

DRAGON



UPDATE

* ISSUE 73. 'Christmas is coming!' OCTOBER 1990. *

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The Gaffer's Bit

No, this issue is NOT a month late, Update is bi-monthly now, remember?. We seem to have collected rather an overdose of commercial ads this month ... seems that someone, somewhere is waiting for you to buy something, but other than that things are much the same as usual ... numbers are still decreasing in the same slow but relentless manner, cash ditto, and my temper is getting steadily worse, in other words, situation normal!.

When you get around to reading the rest of this literary epic you may notice mention of the "AMS4 Show", to be held at Stafford in November. This is NOT a Dragon Show, of course, but this time around the Dragon WILL be represented there (Knight, Preston, Dragsoft, the Group, and possibly Pulser, Dragonfire and a couple of others). Mike Stott has volunteered to run the Group stand (He doubles as Group Masochist), so those of you in the area PLEASE try to go along and keep him awake, or at least buy him a drink ... he deserves one!!.

At the moment it looks as though the December issue will be the last Edited by Stephen ... he seems to imagine that getting "educated" is a better skive than editing this rubbish!. Well, I admit that it is better paid, but other than that! However, all is not yet lost, as we have had TWO volunteers for the job, and as one is contactable by telephone and the other (sensibly!) isn't, the Telecon Subscriber wins the job!. This fortunate individual is already World Famous throughout Leicester for his dedication to the Dragon, so I'm sure you won't be surprised to hear that Robin Hemmings (otherwise known as "Dragonfire") will hopefully be Editing the 1991 Updates!. Anyone commenting that Robin was the obvious successor to Batman will be publicly insulted in the first available issue!.

Well, that's all the news, (or at least all I'm going to tell you!), so as they say, Now read on

Paul G.

The Editor's Bit...

Welcome to the first of the new bi-monthly Updates, which as you can see are no different from the old monthly versions. Sorry if anyone was expecting a revamp, but I just can't be naffed. (**Ooops, is that the "foul language" you were looking for, Paul?**)

Right, that's the formal stuff over. I'll be back later on, but I'm just going to use a bit of the prestigious front page area to mention a few names. I'd like to thank Phil Gainey, Ian Parris (if he's still with us), Edwin Lilly, and Steve Carpenter for putting their thoughts down on paper and giving me some feedback, as requested some months back. Thank you! At least there are SOME people out there!

!!! Almost forgot to mention Ian Burford!. Sorry Ian. Stephen.

More Amateur Radio... J. Brown.

MORSE, or CW as it is sometimes called.

The Dragon will copy and read Morse up to high speeds quite successfully. It will even "teach" you the morse code. One of the conditions of a full amateur licence is that the holder can send and receive a minimum of 12 words per minute using morse, though this does not refer to C.B. (Citizens' Band), which is only LEGALLY allocated frequencies within the 27mhz band but which often encroaches ILLEGALLY into amateur band frequencies.

The amateur licence allows operation in many bands using many modes. Using morse is a more "elegant" method of transmission and can cover the world with very low power and simple equipment. There is in fact a club that caters for the very low power operators, with none running more than 10 watts, and many less than 2 watts.

There are programs available for transmitting and/or receiving at selected speeds, ranging from very low to speeds that could hardly be deciphered by the best operators, even upto 100 words per minute. We need a receiver fitted with either a BFO (beat frequency oscillator) or a product detector, as in SSB receivers. Morse is sent by switching the carrier wave on and off, so the receiver just sees 'clicks'. If we superimpose a tone with these clicks, we get a switching tone, which the "brain" can translate into characters. The BFO is usually manually tunable, so we can select the tone we hear best, normally between 800 and 1000 cycles.

PACKET RADIO

This is probably the most recent introduction to amateur radio, and allows communication using computers, simply loading in the information and letting the program do the rest. In cartridge form, it is quite fast, and there are 'mailboxes' available to leave messages in etc. Some messages give information such as band conditions, stations in strange places for long distance (DX) contacts, and so on. The mailboxes are run mostly by amateurs, although there are some run by groups and clubs. Most are self-financed by raising money in all sorts of ways, like the repeaters in the VHF/UHF bands, and they are fascinating to use and watch.

There are also programs for log keeping, locating stations using the QRA locator or the Maidenhead locator systems, using the computer as a device to produce signals, and even to read frequencies, and demonstrate many new uses for the computer. Most programs are done by dedicated amateurs, especially with the Dragon, for although it has been out of production for many years, there are circuits, programs, and some spares available, and even some new games for those who like to use them.

As I said before, my knowledge of software is very limited, and I like many rely on the dedicated users to produce some interesting programs. To finish, I would like to mention WEFAX, a program that allows signals from the weather stations to be seen on the TV via the Dragon. I have also done Fast Scan TV, using 70cms with live transmissions, and I can provide, in exchange for a cassette, the actual "sounds" of transmissions, so that you know what to look for.

Help Wanted...

Help! I've got a copy of two music programs - The Dragon Composer, and The Dragon Advanced Music System (D.A.M.S.) - but unfortunately, I've no instructions for either, and so I am pleading for help from any kind hearted soul out there to write to me and tell me how to use them.
Nigel Small, 190, Canterbury Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent, TN24 9QL.

More help wanted!!.

Even though I lack knowledge in programming I will never cease friendship with my Dragon, but I would like contacts to help me achieve a better working relationship with it.

I would like to hear from others willing to help with tips & advice on programming, graphic printouts, how to produce and use characters defined in data, and information in general.

Are there any Dragon Tamers in the Bath/Bristol & surrounding areas who would care to get in contact? All letters acknowledged.

A.C.Drewitt. The Pokey, 3, Stuart Place, East Twerton, Bath, Avon. BA2-3RQ.

PEEKING THE DRAGON (29) BY MIKE STOTT

As most of you know Update is now bi-monthly instead of monthly. So that I am not rushing to construct an article at the last moment I am going to alter my format slightly. It will be in the form of a diary and I will write some of the article every so often dating it with the day each part is written. Do not worry - nothing else will change. It will still be the same old rubbish.

25th July - Dragonfire have sent me WORDGRID/POSTER on one tape/disk, which will produce a wordsearch puzzle and (obviously) a poster. Also TRUE OR BLUFF which is a version of the TV programme Call My Bluff. Their third new release is TREASURE HUNT, a very simple BASIC game, but also has two more ready made files for TRUE OR BLUFF. The above are 3.00 per tape or disk and are all written by Roy Cashmore. Dragonfire have also taken over the marketing of Richard Sutcliffe's LETTER WRITER. Robin was impressed with Harvey Grey's honesty when reviewing HOLE - good to hear somebody say something nice about reviewers.

3rd August - Pulsar have brought out BUSINESS PACK, UTILITY PACK and RENJU/RADIO HAM but have sent me no prices. They also tell me that they have the rights to TOTAL ECLIPSE on disk. BUSINESS does Stock, Accounts and Invoicing. UTILITY has Labels, Menus, Dumps, Memo pad and Disk saver.

Tim Lees wants help with some adventures:

ARROWS OF DEATH (1) - Pillow with something inside - how do you get it?

CIRCUS - What do you do after you have met the clown?

PULSAR 7 - Just wandering round and end up in the workshop where only way is down and dark. (TURN ROD which is found by moving the couch in the 1st location.)

FISHY BUSINESS - What to do when you reach the undersea world?

GOLDEN BATON - In the cabin when you go down there is a door I can't open one way and a beach the other. What is there to do?

HULK - Keep ending in room with strange markings and no exit. LOOK MIRROR does not help. HARE RAISER - How do you play this game? (S.Ed. - I want to know that myself) MANIC MINER - How to copy it to disc?

Have treated myself to a Data Switch so I can run my printer off my PC and my Dragon without disconnecting anything - GREAT!!

6th August - An unreadable signature from Baldock, Herts wants help in SEA QUEST. Where is the anchor? What do you do with the balloon? (PULL CORD and TIE ANCHOR) Where are the other items? (Mermaid has key, I think she wants the mirror. Open the clam. BIG CAVE for a bribe for Pirate. BREAK WINDOW in Beach House for credit card) The same person wants help in other adventures but does not say what help. Please contact me again with the specific problems.

Paul Burgin has sent me a copy of TETRIS. From what I had heard of the game I was not looking forward to it but now I am hooked. This is the best game since Balldozer. Maybe even better when it is finished. Paul wants to make a true copy of the game but has only played the first 9 levels. If anyone out there knows what happens after Level 9 or knows how the scoring works (apart from completing lines and "coming 1st" bonus) please contact Paul Burgin or me. Free copies of the new game for those who help most.

Alex Paris wants help with Pulsar 7 but as he sent me his tape to test I have already replied to his queries. If anybody wants immediate help then do not forget to send me a SAE as otherwise I cannot afford to write to everybody and you will have to wait a long time to read it in Update.

3rd September - War declared. Sorry, wrong year! Geir Hovland has sent me a copy of FEDIT which is a disk based text editor with extra features such as the full IBM international character set available on screen (very useful for non-UK residents especially). If anybody can help with any of the adventure problems listed above please let me know so I can pass the answers on. Why not list some of your own queries and let's see if we can crack them for you. In case the next Update is late let me wish you a Happy Christmas now.

EASY MACHINE CODE 16 RAD

To start the printer dump routine with DASM... the usual.

```

10 CLEAR 800,&H4FFF      THIS GIVES ROOM FOR M/CODE FROM &H7000.
20 EXEC &HCFFA           TO EXEC THE DASM.
30 ALL                   TO PRINT ON SCREEN.
40 BRA @BEGIN            TO JUMP OVER THE DATA AND STORES TO THE LABEL.
50 @ESC FCB 27,23,18,$0  THIS SETS THE 105 INTO ELITE FONT AND GRAPHICS.
60 @SCREEN FCB 0,0        THIS IS A STORE TO HOLD THE SCREEN ADDRESS.
70 @SCREND FCB 0,0        THIS STORE IS FOR THE SCREEN END.
80 @BIT FCB 0,0           THIS STORE IS FOR THE BITA USE.
90 @CUM FCB 0,0,0         THIS ONE FOR THE NUMBER SENT TO THE PRINTER.
100 @ELONG FCB 27,14,0    THIS SETS THE 105 INTO ELONGATION MODE.
110 @NOLONG FCB 27,15,0   THIS RETURNS THE 105 TO NORMAL FONT.
120 FCC 0,0              LEAVE A SPACE.
130 @CR FCB $0D,0         FOR CARRIAGE RETURN.
140 @BEGIN LDU #@ESC      LOAD THE U REGISTER WITH THE ADDRESS OF THE DATA IN LINE
50.

```

We will send the commands to the printer in due course. This is where the program starts.

BUSINESS PACK REVIEWED BY RAYMOND ROACH

The BUSINESS PACK by Neil O'Connor comprises two disks, one for Stock Control and the other for Business Accounts and Invoices. The programme is well written and the accompanying notes are very full and clear. The screen presentation of Stock, Accounts and Invoices I found far from satisfactory due to the fact that they are presented on a 32 character screen. The print-out is, however, excellent. I found the introduction of stock etc into memory tedious due to the fact that, after every entry, the programme returned to Menu rather than permitting continuous additions. I also found that the programme would not accept such suffixes as 'each' or 'pair' after the price. The author has obviously put a lot of work into this pack and for any small business with access to a DRAGON these programmes should be of considerable value, accepting the limitations of the screen presentation. Perhaps thought might be given to a programme alteration to give a 51 character screen with true lower case and easier data loading. With such alterations I would give this pack a high recommendation.

BUSINESS PACK available from Pulser Software, 36 Foxhill, High Crompton, Shaw, Oldham, OL2 7NQ (no price sent with review copy)

* FEdit *

Fast Edit v1.00 - The new powerful diskbased text editor for the Dragon 32/64. The main features are: IBM's international character set (255 characters on screen at the same time), Up/Download facility via RS-232 (Dragon 64 only), 64*23 characters (black on white) on screen, scrolling which enables 255 characters per line, Keyboard repeat/delay time control, Fully menu driven with pull-down menus and windows, Fast - written entirely in assembler, Block move/copy/delete commands, Search & Replace functions, a point & click file selector when loading files, supporting both parallel and serial printers, wordwrap, word-line-characters count, linefeed toggle on/off, and more. For only 100 Norwegian Kroner you receive a DragonDos/SuperDos disk with Fast Edit and a laser-printed manual. (Pay with a cheque only.) Orders to:

Geir E. Hovland, Stubbsvingen 67B, 7036 Trondheim, NORWAY.

The end of fishy business...

Well fish fans, this is it - the last ever 'Fishy Business'. Yes, I know I said I would keep going for a few more months, but there really doesn't seem any point in continuing to attempt to write a regular column devoted to games when firstly there are no new games available, and secondly I have not received a letter from any of you lot for about 3 months. In fact, I haven't even got the material to write anything of note this month, so it's going to be a pretty miserable farewell.

I don't know in which month this will go out, but by the time you people in subscriberland are reading this I'll be long gone, up north to a university, the name of which will not be released as I have no intention of subjecting the said university's authorities to the responsibility of mass crowd control during my arrival (##Translated, this means "I'm not divulging the university's name as I don't want pages of comments from Paul" - a wise move!...SW##). I will not be taking my Dragon with me, and there's a fair chance that once I've finished writing this article I'll never use the poor old thing again. 'But why?!' you may cry in anguish. Allow me to enlighten you with a brief history of my Dragon-using life...

I bought my first Dragon in 1985 for 60.00, second hand. Although I knew the company had gone bust, I had seen copies of Dragon User in our local newsagents, and thus decided things couldn't be that bad. Sure enough, I'd soon amassed a reasonable sized collection of good games. I was never one of these people who got a computer and the told everyone they were going to use it to become an expert programmer, and after a few inept attempts at writing in BASIC I decided that I was wasting my time, when there were other people out there who were far better at it than me and whose work I could get at minimal cost. Of course, I wish now that I could program but there is no way I'd have the time or patience to learn. Thus I have become a seemingly rare creature on the Dragon scene, a games addict, pure and unadulterated, unable to program anything and therefore committed to furthering the cause of the entertainment software junkie by any means at my disposal. Hence 'Fishy Business'. But sadly there is nothing left in the Dragon market for me or any of my kind now. No new games are around, and all my old ones are either completed or have been played to exhaustion. So why go on?

Writing 'Fishy Business' has never been easy. I asked no payment for it; I didn't care as I felt I had to put something back into a group which does so much for so little anyway. I did not ask for free copies of games to review (although Paul Burgin did send some as an act of spontaneous generosity). Everything I reviewed was bought with my own hard earned cash. I never even wrote to fuel my own ego. I have never personally revealed my name in this column; nor will I. All I ever asked for in my attempts to keep the Dragon games scene alive was a bit of help from you lot. What did I get in return? A handful of letters, which over more than a year numbered less than 20. Thanks to the few who did write. And to the rest of you, the current games situation is COMPLETELY your fault. I never thought I'd write this but, to be perfectly frank, I'm sick of the Dragon. I'll see out the rest of my Update subscription through morbid fascination, but as far as active involvement is concerned, I'm finished. As a non-programming genius, I have no further interest. So, goodbye forever, and I honestly hope you get your act together before every other aspect of the Dragon goes the same way as me. At least I can say I tried. Will you be able to say the same when Update goes down the pan?... Dudley, the incredible games-playing goldfish.

Sorry to see you go, Dud, but I know EXACTLY how you feel!. By the way, if certain people run true to form we'll now get half a dozen letters claiming that you're "abusive and insulting!". Some of these types can't stand the truth!. Paul.

Oops...

Apparently, the map reader program last month had a couple of errors in. Line 260, MID\$(A\$(9)) should be MID\$(A\$(0)), and line 280 GOSUB 200 should be GOSUB 2000. Thanks to Raymond Roach and Mike Stott for letting me know. Stephen.

OS9 Processes & Modules - Malcolm Cowen

Another of the ways OS9 is different to, and better than, FLEX or DragonDOS, or the various operating systems on IBM PCs and BBCs, is its ability to do more than one thing at a time, to 'multi-task'. This is powerful, more than you might imagine at first glance. If you know MS-DOS, FLEX, or DragonDOS, they all have the same basic idea: you have an operating system, which as far as you are concerned is a black box, and either a program or a space waiting for you to load a program in it. You can't usually do much more to modify the operating system, and you certainly can't run more than one program at a time. That's the standard setup. As far as I know, it goes right back to the first CP/M machines, and probably beyond.

On OS9, you have two different and new concepts. Instead of programs, you have Processes (one or more of them) and Modules (lots of them). Processes, or tasks, are what you get when a program runs. Each program running (and the same program may be running more than once) is a process. The process is sometimes called an invocation of a program. Modules are chunks of code or data used by the system. If they are code, then they are read-only, but they can be used by any process or task which wants to obey the chunks of program that they are the code for. If they are not being used at the moment, then they may stay in memory, or they may be discarded and the data area reused for something else. Some of the code modules are part of the system, for example the modules called device drivers (Printer, Rdisk, Pipe) which handle the discs, printer, and so on. Other modules will be things like the DIR module, a program which lists out the system directory, or SHELL, which is the module which reads your input commands and either obeys them itself or passes them to another module like DIR to obey. Whether you regard SHELL as part of the operating system or as a program in its own right is a matter of interpretation. That's the point of OS9, the difference between the operating system and the program is not clear cut.

Some modules are data modules, they may belong to the system or to one of the processes. That's where processes (programs which are running) keep their data. You might ask "how does OS9 know where to put all these modules, and what if two modules need to go in the same place?". The answer is that it doesn't matter, any module can go anywhere. They are written so that they do not assume any fixed position to live in - they are "relocatable". The programs for OS9 never use any addresses for the data or program calls, they use pointers, which contain the required addresses.

So, your machine's software consists not of one operating system and one program, but rather a set of modules which work together to make up the operating system software. My version has nearly two dozen. When you build a new system, you can pick which ones you want, or if you acquire or write a new module, you can add it or replace an older module - it is a "modular" system. To see the modules on your system just type MDIR (enter), and a list is displayed (MDIR is of course another module which gets called by SHELL to generate the list). I mentioned above some of the module types, but there are several others, each doing a different job: KERNAL modules are the heart of the system; the main ones have names like OS9 or OS9p2. The BOOTSTRAP module is what was used to load the system in. It is kept for if you want to write a new boot disc, and it is possible to overwrite the bootstrap, using a GO command, if you want to save some space. FILE HANDLING modules make up most of the list, and come in 3 types: Managers (one per file type eg Random Block File Manager RBF); Device Drivers (one per device type eg Hard Disk); and Device Decryptors (one per device eg d0, d1). SYSGO is a little piece of code whose job is to make sure that there is always at least one shell going. SHELL, as I said above, is the module which interprets your commands (there is more than one kind of shell, although Dragon users tend to all use the same one). When you type in a command, shell examines it and, unless it is a built in command, processes it by looking for:

- 1) a module in memory with that name - if so, the command is passed there for further processing.
- 2) a module in the execution directory - if so, it is loaded, then proceeds as above.
- 3) a file in the current data directory - if so, it creates a new shell process and passes it to the file to read as input instead of the keyboard.

Whatever action shell takes, the user has a choice of specifying that the shell either waits for the new "child" process to finish, or of telling the parent shell process not to wait for the child but to go on and accept further commands from the user. There is even a third option, called piping, in which you create two processes from the one command line, and pass the output from the one into the input of the other. Suppose for example you have written a sort program (called perhaps "SORT"); you could then type something like this:

```
dir ! sort
```

which will create 2 processes, the first an invocation of DIR, and the second an invocation of SORT. The listed output from DIR will be "piped" to SORT as its input, to give a sorted directory listing. Neat isn't it?

There are lots of other clever tricks available with the "redirecting" of input and output. The next article will list some of those, and the other tricks you can use on the command line.

The Tandy DMP 901 printer.

Up until last Christmas, I had been using my Tandy CGP115 printer for all my printing needs. It's an excellent machine and I still use it quite regularly, but for letter writing it wasn't much use, and I had a few minor projects that really needed the speed of a 'proper' printer.

But which one to buy? That was my problem. I had three criteria: firstly, if I was going to buy a printer, I might as well get one that had a reasonable amount of modes of operation. Secondly, it musn't cost too much. And thirdly, I was terrified of spending so much money, and wanted to be sure that it was a reliable machine from a reliable company so that if anything DID go wrong, there would be no problem getting it repaired. Also, getting replacement ribbons and other spares and accessories should not be a problem.

As I also own an Amstrad, I spent a lot of time reading the ads and reviews in the Amstrad magazine, but still didn't feel happy. In the end I returned to the hom of my first machine, Tandy. The first thing that convinced me was that Tandy guarantee that, if they stop selling a product, they will continue to supply all accessories and spares for seven years after the item has been discontinued. My experiences with the plotter would seem to bear this out - I have yet to find a Tandy store which didn't have both the pens and paper for it in stock. Having decided where, I had to look at what they had to offer. In my price range were just two printers, the DMP 900 and 901. The only difference I could find between the two was that the 901 was faster, eg 175cps compared to 120. So, at the asking price of 260.00, I went for the 901.

The printer offers 175cps in draft and 30cps in NLQ. It comes with a parallel interface, though an optional serial interface is available if you really want it. It has a nine pin print head and, after the plotter, I found the options available completely bewildering. Should I select Epson FX or LX, or perhaps one of the IBM options? Should I choose a 6" form feed, or 8" or 11", or 11 and two thirds (?), or 12"? I was pleased to find out that seven different print styles, two font styles, and four form feed choices (including a sheet feeder option) were all available by pressing the right combination of buttons on the control panel, conveniently at the front top righthand side. This means, for example, I can have double height/width with italics in NLQ in font 2 with a form feed of 6 without dipping a single switch.

The list of options is still, to me, quite massive. It has the usual choices I expected, like super-/sub-script, underlining, overscoring, proportional printing etc, and some I didn't know about, like 4 ways of justified printing. Block and line graphics are available as well as the dot graphics.

One feature I found useful which has nothing to do with the Dragon but makes life easier on the Amstrad is that the printer will add 128 to a code sent to it, thus compensating for the seven bit printer interface that Amstrad thoughtfully put in. The manual is very good, giving a short description of each function and a sample program to demonstrate it. In short, I can't see anyone needing anything that this printer doesn't offer. I believe the DMP 900 has just been reduced, and if the speed is the only difference, I would have no qualms in recommending it to anyone. The only grumble I have is a problem getting ribbons. I tried about 10 stores before I found one. I complained to their head office, and was assured that it was a temporary problem that had been sorted out. However, four months later, I went into the local branch for a ribbon to be told they hadn't got any in stock, but were expecting them at any time! Thank heavens for Alladink.

If the author of the piece, who only gave me the name 'Claudius', would care to drop me a line with their REAL name, I'll credit them in the next issue. See? Not as silly as you thought! Stephen.

APOLOGY!!

I would like to apologise to everyone who ordered disc based software from me during the last couple of weeks in September, for the delay in sending out their orders. Two reasons ... one being that I managed to run out of blank discs, and the other that our local post seemed to have been operating a "go-slow", which meant that it took them twice as long to arrive as it should have done!. Sorry!. Paul G.

If...Then...Else(4)...J.M.Winchurch.

This month, let us look at two problems:

1). A tour company makes the following charges for bulk buying of tickets for a trip. For less than 10 tickets, the cost is 10 pounds per ticket. For ten or more the cost falls to 9 pounds per ticket. Write a program which will calculate the bill for a given number of tickets.

1 - Input the number of tickets required; 2 - Check if less than 10 are required, and set the cost accordingly; 3 - Calculate the total cost; 4 - Output the total cost.

```
10 CLS
20 PRINT"NO. OF TICKETS BOUGHT?"
30 INPUT N
40 IF N<10 THEN C=10 ELSE C=9
50 T=N*C
60 PRINT"TOTAL COST-";T;"POUNDS"
```

Not very difficult, eh? Now try this: Write a program which compares three numbers and outputs the value of the smallest. 1 - Input two numbers A and B; 2 - Test which is the smallest; 3 - Store the smallest in X; 4 - Input a third number; 5 - Compare with X; 6 - If it is less than X print it, otherwise print X.

```
10 CLS
20 PRINT"FIRST NO."
30 INPUT A
40 PRINT"SECOND NO."
50 INPUT B
60 IF A<B THEN LET X=A ELSE LET X=B
70 PRINT"THIRD NO."
80 INPUT C
90 IF C<X THEN LET X=C
100 PRINT"THE SMALLEST NO. IS";X
```

What you now have to do is compare 4 numbers and output the smallest. Also, calculate costs if the tour company states: less than 10 tickets = 10 pounds per ticket; 10-20 tickets = 9.50 per ticket; more than 20 tickets = 9.00 per ticket.

Letters To The Editor...

The open letter from Paul Standbrook (July 90) contained one point which did particularly strike home. I am probably one of many who use the Dragon JUST as a home computer. The children type up their school projects and TeleWriter, and we sometimes put together a quick ten-liner in BASIC to complete a maths problem in a more interesting way.

Many articles in Update appear to be written by the real "buffs" who DO belt out reams of assembler code and build memory boards on Vero. This maybe deters people from proffering less complicated articles. Who with an unenhanced D32 understood page 8?

J.M. Winchurch is a person of courage, writing a series of clear articles without fear of "talking down" to those who read them. There's space in Update for the Jeff Purcells AND the Harvey Greys of the Dragon world. Remember the days of Dragon User, where we found articles like "A program to draw spirals in the hi-res screen"? Maybe more readers would like to go back to those less sophisticated days, just to give us all a chance to contribute and keep the editorial staff happier. It's not such a daft idea.

Mike Palmer, St. Albans.

Review of the Rainbow...P.Marlow.

While looking through some back copies of Dragon User, I came across an advert for the American magazine The Rainbow. The description of a magazine that contained an "average of 250 pages packed with programs, tutorials, questions and answers, product reviews, hints and tips for expanding your computer horizons..." certainly fired my imagination, so I sent off for further information. After eight weeks I got the reply I was hoping for. Not only was The Rainbow still around, but the subscription rate of \$68 (42.64) was fairly reasonable (even more so at the latest exchange rate), so on March 10 I filled out the card and waited. The card stated that I should wait six to eight weeks for the first issue, but mine took slightly longer as I received the June issue on June 7.

Now, I hear you ask, what do you get for you \$68? Well, the magazine is professionally produced with approximately 200 glossy pages per issue, and it contains a general letters page, a BASIC training page, the CoCo consultant, an editorial page, a hardware page, readers programs for both novice and expert, a machine code tutorial, notes on OS9 level 2, and plenty of advertisements for software. As The Rainbow is a Colour Computer magazine most of the software and hardware advertised is incompatible with the Dragon, but the printed programs can be used with little or no modification, although you should not even attempt to convert the CoCo 3 programs as it's a waste of time because the Dragon does not have Super Extended Color Basic.

Next time I hope to give a review of the June 1990 issue and, if our glorious editor permits, a review of each subsequent issue and all the back issues I am currently trying to acquire. The Rainbow can be contacted at The Falsoft Building, 9509 U.S. Highway 42, PO Box 385, Prospect, KY 40059, USA. They take Visa, MC, and American Express.

Crossword Answers...

Across:

- 1A). Desiccator.
- 2G). Cress.
- 3J). Beta.
- 4A). Tremble.
- 4H). Miriam.
- 5A). Rye.
- 8A). Sepoy.
- 8G). Pippin.
- 9G). Inflate.
- 10A). Negative.
- 10I). Fudge.
- 11D). Vestry.
- 12A). Queen Mother.
- 13A). Omnibus.

Down:

- A4). Treason.
- B1). Everywhere.
- B11). Sum.
- C1). Screes.
- C10). Glen.
- D4). Microwave.
- E1). Crab.
- E6). Coyote.
- F1). Carlisle.
- G1). Acre.
- H1). Trampoline.
- J3). Brine.
- J8). Plume.
- L2). Stagnant.
- L10). Glue.

The CompuTape story...

Following on from last time, Stuart Parnell and Tim Lees both wrote to me with more details about CompuTape's whereabouts. It seems that around the time of the Hove show, CompuTape sent out a letter announcing that they were closing down. The letter cites "unforeseen circumstances" as CompuTape's reasons for the decision, and it goes on to say that they will be "passing on" their range "to another company".

Thank you to Stuart and Tim for passing on the information, and if anyone has any new details, let us know.
Stephen.

Afterthoughts '73...

There we are then. The penultimate issue of 1990. And indeed, the penultimate issue under my editorial control. Yes, as warned some months back, I'm giving up this hallowed position very shortly, and the next Update, issue 74, will almost certainly be my last. At the moment, I don't actually know who the replacement will be, but I'm sure that, with your support, they can successfully take Update into 1991. Final details next month.

As mentioned earlier, thanks to those who gave me some feedback this month, and how about some from the rest of you? Your comments on articles, Update in general, anything you like. Now more than ever, Update is what YOU make it. Also, if you can help with any of the requests this month, please do so. You may have the knowledge which someone else is looking for, so lend a hand if you can.

As we say goodbye to Dudley, I can only echo his sentiments with regard to Update's future. I really don't know what's going to happen next year, but if the effort is left to "someone else", then NDUG is going to disappear very quickly. Can YOU something about it?

Well, I think that's everything that's worth mentioning. So, for the last time, see you in December.
Stephen.

BUZZIN BERTIE REVIEWED BY PHIL CHATFIELD.

There is no such thing as 'bad new software'. Think about it!! Assuming there is anyone left out there to think about it. *** N.B. That was a general comment that I hope to slip into the publication unseen by the software ed. and has nothing to do with the review. (Mike - I may have missed your comments this time Phil but don't do it again.)

Having loaded the tape according to the instructions one is met by a very pleasing title screen accompanied by some nice sound effects, or is it the other way round? Don't touch that button!!! : cos if you leave the tune on just a millisecond before your sanity gives way you will be rewarded by a glimpse of all the screens that are about to challenge you. At least I think it's the lot. Who knows what mysteries are in store.

Whilst sitting back and admiring the variety and imaginativeness you will probably be struck by the same thought as myself. "The game screens ain't as pretty as wot the title screen wos." Don't worry, you won't have time to look at them other than now. As soon as you start the game you'll be too busy watching the time slip away whilst you try to slip away from an object I've yet to identify. Old Father Time maybe? The score you achieve for finishing a screen is not good. If you're a 'high score hero' you'll have to pick up the objects on the way, and sniff the occasional blossom. Is that what bees do?

The thing I really like about this game is that it has built in variety. There is no fighting your way up to screen 9,999,999 and then crumbling back to screen 1 after losing a life. Using the options available on most screens you can choose which way you go. Hence, no instant frustration at the end of each game. You just say, "Right, I'll go in a different way this time".

I have not reached any sort of conclusion in this game yet so I can't tell you if there is one. Hope there is!! There are some tricky touches along the way to keep you alert. I have encountered what seems to be impossible screens but I'm sure that's just me.

Conclusion: Good game, keeps you interested, someone out there must reach the end, if so please tell me what it is. Criticism: The usual bit, more info in the documentation (i.e. is there an end? Wot is the meaning of life, etc)

BUZZING BERTIE is available from Duncan Bryan, 74 Beeston Road, Dunkirk, Nottingham, NG7 2JP (Tel 0602 422879), no details of price sent with review copy.

GROUP SERVICES:

DRAGONART GRAPHICS LIBRARY. Contains the biggest and best collection of graphics screens for the Dragon, all available at nominal charges. The Library also makes YOUR original graphics efforts. Full details and list available from:
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THE PD LIBRARY is now fully operational once again. For full details of material available contact Stuart Beardwood. More contributions always wanted, so if YOU have any suitable material please let Stuart know. @ Stuart Beardwood, 38, Salisbury Place, Boothtown, Halifax. HX3-6ND.

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Manual wanted for DATAPLAN cassette, Business/Home Filing/Reporting System. (PSSI). A.C.Drewitt, The Pokey, 3,Stuart Place, East Twerton, Bath, Avon.

WANTED: Can anyone lend me a copy of 'Tape Doctor', please?. J.Brown, 45,Mariborough Avenue, Falmouth, Cornwall.TR11-4HS.

Dragon 32, Telewriter w/p, plus Tandy DMP200 for sale. All working and hardly used. 100.00 the lot. Phone Alan Herring on 0425-617656 (days) or 611247 (evenings).

STILL WANTED!!. Good Dragon 64 at reasonable price, please. Phone John Pentland on 0592-203964.

WANTED: Dragon twin disc drive and DGS. Sensible price please. Phone Darren on 0642-480798.

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Replies from J. Brown.

Just a few answers to questions resulting from my Amateur Radio articles:-

1. Yes, I am a fully licenced radio ham, call sign G3LPB. I have also held G6AMQ/T which is Amateur TV. (This gives permission to transmit normal TV as an Amateur.).

2. Yes, I can use all or any of the modes mentioned in my articles, although I rarely do so now. My main interest is construction (building equipment), though not so much since I became hooked on the Dragon.

3. Yes, I can run tape or DOS V1.0 etc.

4. No, my knowledge of software is very limited, and I have to rely on others for that, although I AM trying!.

I hope this covers most of the outstanding queries. Again, I'm always willing to assist in any way that I can ... we must all try to keep the Dragon "On the Air"!.

J.Brown.

The Late, Late Bit

I suppose I should begin with a couple of apologies there were two letters sent in for publication which I had intended to include in this issue, but owing to the late arrival of a couple of "commercial" ads, both of which HAD to go into this issue, I don't have sufficient space left for them. Problem is that I can't print an odd number of pages, and I haven't enough material for TWO sides, so I'm afraid your letters will have to wait for the December Issue. Sorry, but better late than edited down to fit the remaining space in this one!. Nothing worth reporting here, so I'll limit myself to a "scrounge session"! ... I've just traded in my "second" machine (Apple 2+) for an equally ancient IBM XT, so if anyone has any interesting/useful hardware or software for the beast going cheap, PLEASE give me a call!. (NO!, I am NOT dropping the D64!, the Dragon is far superior!..). Paul.

PULSER SOFTWARE are appealing for the copyright holders of an educational game called "Tiger Grand Prix" by Tiger Software to contact them at the address below, as they are intending to release a modified disk version with extra files.

If nobody contacts them by 28 days after the publication of this newsletter, they will assume that the copyright no longer exists and will proceed to sell the disk version of the game.

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December 18th 1990.

Dear Paul,

Crossword Number 36
Herewith my answers to the above:-

1a FRACTURE A1 FERMENTATION
1i JAPE B7 HUTCH
2a ERNIE C10 TILL
3a RINGLET D1 CIGARETTE
4c JAVELIN F2 TEE
4j RUIN G2 ATLANTA
5i RIGID G10 TREE
7d THATCHER H5 URCHIN
8a AUSTRIA I1 JOHN
8h HORROR J6 WEREWOLF
9c TENERIFE K1 PLOUGH
10c TROUT L9 WAND
11a FORENOON M1 CHANDLER
13a GULLIVER

May I also take this opportunity to wish you a
merry christmas and a prosperous new year, and also to thank
you for all you do for the group.

Kind regards,

Eddie

Eddie Freeman.

Mr. P. Grade,
6 Navarino Road,
Worthing,
Sussex.