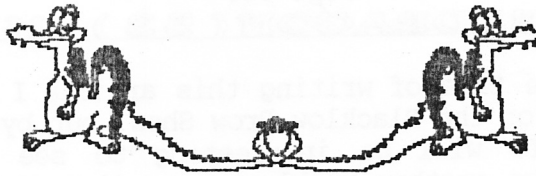


The Newsletter of the National Dragon User's Group

DRAGON



UPDATE

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THE GAFFER'S BIT .....

Once upon a time, a long, long time ago, there were at least a dozen assorted Dragon groups, clubs, magazines, newsletters, etc, and most of them had no difficulty at all in getting enough material to print (even if a lot of it was complete rubbish) because there were simply THOUSANDS of Enthusiastic Dragon Owners all happy to pour out reams of the Stuff That Keeps Editors Happy (NO, Steve, NOT Smirnoff!). Unfortunately, both the Enthusiasm and the number of Dragons has decreased more than somewhat, to the extent that the last surviving Newsletter can't get enough material for a full length issue now .... so brush the mice out of your Dragon, blow the worst of the dust off the keyboard, and try to remember where you put all that enthusiasm ... we need it, NOW!.

Not much new to report this time around, so it's probably a good job that Stephen got carried away and filled most of the front page for me. One small item worthy of mention though is that I seem to have discovered an efficient computer firm!. They don't deal with Dragon stuff, but if anyone is interested, Sudbury Electronics seem to believe in a fast turnaround on orders ... phoned them for details of a keyboard on Tuesday afternoon ... all questions answered fully and promptly; sent order and cheque Wednesday morning; keyboard arrived here Friday morning!. What's more, their prices are better than most too!. Paul G.

Pointless Waffle Corner...

Whilst going through the previous issue of Update (yes, not only do I edit this stuff, I also READ it occasionally. Promise you won't tell anyone...) I noticed that somehow we had managed to shamefully overlook the fact that the August issue was actually NDUG's tenth birthday (for those of you trying to figure out where the "missing" 23 editions of Update went, remember we went bi-monthly in 1990). His Lordship, no doubt, omitted to point this out because he was hoping for early retirement ten years ago, and every August is a painful reminder of his now legendary mistake of volunteering to set up a National Group without actually volunteering to set up a National Group. Yet here we are, ten years later, and considering those ten years have been spent without the presence of Dragon Data, we have achieved a surprising amount. How much longer this can be sustained is anyone's guess, but with the current levels of input from the members it could be possible that Update goes quarterly in the not too distant future. Please help me prevent that by writing an article - a short one will do. Ten minutes is not too long to spend preserving a ten year history.

Happy (Belated) Birthday, NDUG. Commiserations, Paul...

Final Instalment In A Now-Irritating Series:

a) Chairman Grade

b) Servalan from 'Blake's 7' (wearing the slinky number from episode 24 "Gambit").

Sorry...one for the Chairman and Editor only, there.

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NDUG - Everything we do is written by you

PEEKING THE DRAGON(53) MIKE STOTT

14th August 1994 - At the time of writing this article I am still in the middle of preparing everything for the Blacklow Brow Show, but by the time you read this it will be all over. It will be interesting to see whether enough people supported the show to make another viable or was that the last ever Dragon Show which would virtually hammer the last nail in the coffin for the Dragon.

Advance bookings from the customers have been fairly good but I have been very disappointed by the response from the companies. It cannot be the cost as this is minimal. Maybe they no longer wish to support us. If so they are going to be left with a lot of stock on their hands. Anyway, I intend to be optimistic and hope that others besides Dragsoft finally came and we are all carrying on as usual. The day after my last article appeared asking if anybody had got JOHNNY REB and ROMAN EMPIRE onto disk I received copies of each from Tim Lees. Thanks for that quick response, Tim, much appreciated. The day after I received another disk from Dave Cadman with these same programs. Thanks to Dave. He says that he used DUPLIDISK2 to convert JOHNNY REB using "Save in one option" so this should help others out there who are also trying to get this program on to disk.

Dave has got four disks crammed full of strategy games and has sent me printouts of the directories. He has been unable to put KRIEGSPIEL or UP PERISCOPE from Beyond Software on to disk but I am sure that there is someone out there who has been able to manage it. Dave suggests a "LOOKING FOR SOFTWARE" column in Update and I would be more than willing to include any requests in my article so if anybody is looking for a particular program please let me know what it is and I will publish it. Please tell me whether you have disk and/or cassette and whether you run a 32 or 64 as some basic programs use USR commands which are not compatible.

29th August 1994 - I have just returned from a weeks holiday at Pontins in Blackpool and, despite feeling very tired after all the activities and late nights, I realise that I have got to complete this article quickly and get it into the post to Stephen or you will all be looking at a blank page. I must thank Ray Smith for making up the compilations of UP2DATE software for sale at the Blacklow Brow show. I just hope that all his efforts were worthwhile and that we were able to sell quite a few copies of them as they really are good value for money. Ray put a lot of work into compiling them together with a menu for each disk to make them so much easier to use. When I first thought of the idea I was just going to put the programs on the disks but Ray kindly volunteered to do it for me, and he really has done a marvellous job. Those of you who do not get UP2DATE are missing out on a real treat every other month. It always has a few working programs on the disk together with reviews, adventure help, letters, and many other items. I do not know how Ray manages to fill a disk each time as I know how hard it is to fill just one page each UPDATE issue. As most of you will have noticed the last issue of UPDATE was slimmer than usual. This is because fewer people are sending in articles. I am sure that there are a lot of people out there who have got little tips or experiences with the Dragon that they could share with the rest of us. Why not write something about them and send them to Stephen so that we can all share them. It does not have to be an epic. Even one paragraph will help to fill out the pages and make UPDATE more interesting for everybody. I know how hard it is to write about something as I have to fill a page every issue. Has anybody got any queries about any Dragon software that I can help you with? If I do not know the answer there is sure to be somebody out there who will be able to help. Come on now, let's have articles flooding in to Stephen and questions coming in to me so that we can help everybody with their Dragon problems. In my next article I will be telling you all about the show. Hopefully there will be good news about the future of the Dragon and reports about new items of software. I have not heard any whispers about new software for a long time although rumours have been circulating about companies which are no longer dealing. Hopefully these are untrue and I hope to give you more news in my next article.

Page 3 Boobs...

If you're going to go, go in style. The award for mistake of the year goes to your revered Chairman et moi, who between us managed to omit two-thirds of John Payne's Forth program from the previous issue. Reprinted (or, perhaps, just "printed") below are the missing ten screens of John's Mastermind program, and they slot in front of the six or so printed in the August issue. A thousand apologies, John, and to anyone who wondered why they couldn't get the program to work. SW.

SCR£ 480

```
( MASTERMIND PLAYER )
0 CONSTANT NULL
1 CONSTANT RED
2 CONSTANT BLUE
3 CONSTANT BROWN
4 CONSTANT GREEN
5 CONSTANT YELLOW
6 CONSTANT ORANGE  -->
```

SCR£ 482

```
: MATCHCOLR ( colour -- flag )
  4 0 DO DUP I T.ROW C@ =
    IF NULL I T.ROW C!
      ( cross out match )
      0= ( colour -> 0 ) LEAVE
    ENDIF LOOP 0= ; -->
( Searches T.ROW for colour
  which must not be 0 )
```

SCR£ 484

```
: MARK ( guess.adr target.adr --
  £black £white )
  BLACKCNT 0 ( init. white£ )
  4 0 DO I G.ROW C@ -DUP
    IF ( not 0 ) MATCHCOLR
      + ( add flag to count )
    ENDIF
  LOOP ; -->
```

SCR£ 486

```
: NEXTGUESS ( -- overflowflag )
  0 3 CYCLE IF 2 CYCLE IF
  1 CYCLE IF 0 CYCLE IF 0=
  ENDIF ENDIF ENDIF ENDIF ;
  HERE 36 ALLOT ( for 9 guesses )
  : GUESSES ( guess£ -- addr )
    4 * [ DUP ] LITERAL + ; DROP
-->
```

SCR£ 488

```
: MAKEGUESS
  BEGIN NEXTGUESS
  IF CR ." Hypotheses exhaust
ed" QUIT ENDIF
  VIABLE UNTIL ;
  : ENTERIT 0 GUESS ROW£ @ 1+
    DUP ROW£ ! GUESSES 4 CMOVE ;
-->
```

SCR£ 481

```
: ARRAY <BUILDS ALLOT DOES> + ;
4 ARRAY T.ROW ( Target Row )
4 ARRAY G.ROW ( Guess Row )
4 ARRAY GUESS ( Current Guess )
4 ARRAY A.ROW ( Answer Row )
9 ARRAY B.PEGS (Black Pegs )
9 ARRAY W.PEGS ( White Pegs )
0 VARIABLE ROW£ -->
```

SCR£ 483

```
: BLACKCNT ( addr1 addr2 -- £ )
  0 T.ROW 4 CMOVE
  0 G.ROW 4 CMOVE
  0 ( initial peg count ) 4 0
  DO I T.ROW C@ I G.ROW C@ =
    IF NULL I T.ROW C!
      NULL I G.ROW C! 1+ ENDIF
  LOOP ; -->
```

SCR£ 485

```
: CYCLE ( col£ -- overflowflag)
  GUESS DUP ( addr ) C@
  1- DUP ( colour ) 0= SWAP
  OVER IF DROP ORANGE ENDIF
  ROT C! ;
  : INIT 0 GUESS 3 ORANGE FILL
  ORANGE 1+ 3 GUESS C!
  0 ROW£ ! ; -->
```

SCR£ 487

```
: VIABLE ( -- flag )
  1 ( true ) ROW£ @ 1+ 0
  DO I GUESSES 0 GUESS MARK
    I W.PEGS C@ -
    IF DROP 0= LEAVE ELSE
      I B.PEGS C@ - IF 0= LEAVE
    ENDIF ENDIF
  LOOP ; -->
```

SCR£ 489

```
: .COL ( colour --- ) DUP 1 =
  IF ." RED " ELSE DUP 2 =
  IF ." BLUE " ELSE DUP 3 =
  IF ." BROWN " ELSE DUP 4 =
  IF ." GREEN " ELSE DUP 5 =
  IF ." YELLOW " ELSE DUP 6 =
  IF ." ORANGE " ENDIF ENDIF ENDIF
  ENDIF ENDIF ENDIF DROP ; -->
```



A Game For You...David Mitchell.

This listing is of a public domain game which I found on a disk of ST source codes. It is a Kingdom type game where you run a community through the harvest. The game has been converted to the Dragon to run on the text screen but can be improved using a hi-res text driver with a bigger screen. Each peasant needs at least 20 bushels to avoid starving. Large handouts will attract more people to your town. You need at least 0.6 bushels for each hectare sown, and at least 1 peasant to look after every 10 hectares sown.

```

10 CLS:PRINT"HAMURABI":PRINT:PRINT"YOU ARE HAMURABI KING OF SUMERIA":PRINT"(TO
END GAME SELL ALL YOUR LAND)"
20 A$=INKEY$:IF A$="" THEN 20
30 CLS:A1=100:A2=5:A3=0:B1=2800:B2=200:B3=3:B4=3000:C1=1000:D1=0:J=1
40 D1=D1+1
50 CLS:PRINT"YEAR N£";D1:PRINT"PEASANTS STARVED";A3:PRINT"NEW PEASANTS";A2
60 IF J>0 THEN GOTO 80
70 A1=A1-INT(A1/2):PRINT"BUT BLACK FEVER KILLED HALF"
80 A$=INKEY$:IF A$="" THEN 80
90 CLS:PRINT"PEASANTS ";A1:PRINT"CROP IS";B3;"BUSHEL/HECTARE"
100 PRINT"TOTAL ";B4;" BUSHEL"
110 IF B2=0 THEN GOTO 130
120 PRINT" BUT MICE ATE ";B2
130 PRINT B1;" IN THE GRANARIES"
140 C2=17+RND(6):PRINT"THE TOWN HAS ";C1;"HECTARES"
150 PRINT"LAND PRICE";C2;" BUSHEL/HECTARE":PRINT"HOW MANY HECTARES TO BUY"
160 INPUT I:I=INT(ABS(I)):IF I=0 THEN GOTO 200
170 J=I*C2:IF J<=B1 THEN GOTO 190
180 GOSUB 470:GOTO 150
190 B1=B1-J:C1=C1+I
200 PRINT"HOW MANY HECTARES TO SELL"
210 INPUT I:I=INT(ABS(I)):IF I=0 THEN GOTO 260
220 IF I<C1 THEN GOTO 250
230 IF I=C1 THEN END
240 GOSUB 470:GOTO 200
250 C1=C1-I:B1=B1+C2*I
260 PRINT"HOW MANY BUSHEL OF WHEAT WILL YOU GIVE TO YOUR PEASANTS"
270 INPUT I:I=INT(ABS(I)):IF I<=B1 THEN GOTO 290
280 GOSUB 470:GOTO 260
290 B1=B1-I:A3=A1-INT(I/20):A2=0:IFA3>0 THEN GOTO 350
300 A3=A1-INT(I/20)
310 A2=0
320 IF A3>0 THEN GOTO 350
330 A2=-A3/2
340 A3=0
350 PRINT"HOW MANY HECTARES TO SOW"
360 INPUT I:I=INT(ABS(I)):IF I>C1 THEN GOTO 390
370 J=INT(I/2)
380 IF J<=B1 THEN GOTO 410
390 GOSUB 470
400 GOTO 350
410 IF I>10*A1 THEN GOTO 390
420 B1=B1-J:B3=INT(5*RND(1))+1:B4=B3*I:B2=INT((B1+B4)*0.07*RND(1))
430 B1=B1-B2+B4:J=INT(10*RND(1)):A2=INT(A2+(5-B3)*B1/600+1)
440 IF A2<=50 THEN GOTO 460
450 A2=50
460 A1=A1+A2-A3:GOTO 40
470 REM ERRORS
480 PRINT:PRINT"HAMURABI BE CAREFUL"
490 PRINT A1;" PEASANTS,";C1;" HECTARES AND ";B1;"BUSHEL":RETURN

```



"Telegraph" Editorial. John Payne

The title is inspired by Stephen Wood's "The Sun says" piece, and provides an excuse for the "I know better than you" style, whilst dealing with a miscellany of topics from the last Update.

#### 1. "People Who Know About Computers".

At present in our society, people are not allowed to do damage to themselves in certain ways (legislation on seat belts, crash helmets etc). A logical extension of this is to require a computer "Driving test" for anyone wishing to computerise their business. Such a person ought to know the computer equivalent of the Highway Code, which would include the following provisions (amongst others):

- The Owner of a computer must not allow unqualified persons to meddle with the said computer.
- The Owner must never, ever, allow the hard disk to be the sole repository of important information.

The first provision would mean that the computer owner would have to demonstrate the ability to recognise an idiot when he saw one seated at a keyboard, whilst the second provision would force back-up of the hard disk to floppy, tape or whatever.

There are so many ways to lose data from hard disks (hardware problems as well as idiots and software) that back-up is essential, not just prudent.

#### 2. Windows 3.1, "Most Annoying Software"?

Sorry chaps, I hate to be nice to Microsoft too, but Windows 3.1 is not a bad bit of software for 50.00. Naturally, it does not live up to its hype (most especially, it is not "intuitive" unless your intuition happens to coincide with the bloke's who wrote it), but it is a bit easier (for the user) than the C: prompt, and they throw in some useful applications. One enlightened manufacturer realises that Windows isn't intuitive, so he provides a tutorial that teaches you how to work it. For instance, by pointing and clicking on a scanned-in photograph of a mouse, you can bring up an explanation of how to point-and-click. Clever, eh? It is surprising how it does not occur even to seasoned point&clickers to click on a photograph rather than an icon.

#### 3. Back To Basics.

Clive Scott is quite right about the enormous resources consumed by current PC software. I know someone who bought a 66MHz 486DX2. He found that, with essentials like the on-line spell checker and thesaurus turned on, Word for Windows could not keep up with his two-finger typing. The problem turned out to be that he had too little RAM (a paltry 4MB). Upping the RAM to 8MB solved the problem.

However, a (much) cheaper solution is to use WRITE, the word processor bundled with Windows (see above), which works OK with 2MB of RAM and an 8MHz 386SX. It even allows you to mess about with typefaces if that kind of thing makes you happy (whoops...honest, Paul, Update looks much nicer now you've got your new printer).

#### 4. The Dragon

I ought to mention the Dragon since this is Update. The Dragon is your last chance to be in charge of the computer. With the PC, the software writers are in charge, and you have to live with what they give you.

#### 5. Mouse Driver

It ought to be possible to connect a PC serial mouse to the D64 serial port. However, the PC defines a software interface to the mouse driver program (by software interrupts) so that any software can access a mouse in the standard way. The Dragon doesn't have a defined mouse driver interface (although it does have software interrupts) so there's no point in writing a driver as such. Each program would have to be patched individually to use the mouse.

6. I.P.Jones' MIDI article.

Musical sophisticates among you will know that besides note pitches, note lengths are important. This means that timing information has to be generated and stored along with MIDI data. Therefore, simply transferring data between the MIDI interface and RAM or disk is not very useful. Using more than one MIDI device at a time is simply a matter of setting the devices to different channels and transmitting each device's data on its own channel, by using the proper MIDI command byte.

This is also useful with most MIDI keyboards, because one can usually associate a different "voice" with each channel. A single keyboard couldn't manage an orchestra, and anyway the MIDI standard only allows 16 channels, but sextets are possible.

My Forth MIDI systems, which lets you enter music at the computer and have it played on the music keyboard, could easily be adapted to handle I.P.Jones' MIDI interface. I sent him a version about a year ago (lost in the post??). The only difficulty is that one can't debug without access to the hardware.

*%% OK, John, but I STILL think that meece are the feline equivalent of Meals on Wheels (legs?), that Icons are Holy Pictures (to be pointed at while praying that 3.1 hasn't swallowed the last of the RAM before saving your day's work), and that Windows are things people jump through when the prayer isn't answered. Me? ... I'll stick to DOS!. Paul.*

Through A Glass Darkly. C. Scott

By the time you read this article, the Dragon will have had its 12th birthday, which in computer terms is positively ancient - if it was human, it would have received the Queen's telegram by now!

I purchased one of the original machines in August 1982, and at the time it was a well specified machine. It had a proper keyboard, enough memory to do something useful with, and a good version of BASIC. Its main deficiency, even in those days, was its poor display.

Its main rivals were either kit built, poorly specified, or very expensive - sometimes all three! This partially accounted for its early success. However, it never got the same level of support from the software houses that some of its rivals did, and it was very poorly promoted by its manufacturer, originally Mettoy and later Dragon Data.

By 1984, the market for home computers was being swamped by machines made by companies trying to cash in on the home computer boom, and most failed through lack of support. The Dragon suffered from the late introduction of peripherals, i.e disk drives and the updated Dragon 64. By the time it came out, together with OS9, the competition was very fierce. Several management upheavals and cash flow shortages prevented the necessary development being done on the much needed new machines.

However, when Amstrad entered the scene they changed the home computer market for ever, particularly with the introduction of the PC1512. This brought PC compatibles within the reach of individuals for the first time. PC compatibles have killed off the home computer as we know it, with only Atari left with an affordable home computer. I understand, incidentally, that Commodore have gone into liquidation with huge losses (\*\*...casting some doubt on the future of the CD32..SW\*\*).

The home computer market has fragmented into games consoles (SEGA and Nintendo) for games players, and PC compatibles for serious use and occasional games playing. Apple and Acorn are nibbling at the leftovers.

The home computer market has become very predictable and frankly uninteresting. The excitement and variety of the early 80s is unlikely to return, so perhaps I should stop here before I get accused of being an old fart and start reminiscing about the state of the music scene and the price of a pint!

*%% I agree with almost all of the above ... but did that peculiar Z80A Amstrad 464 REALLY change anything except Alan Sugar's bank balance?. Paul G.*

GOD CREATED THE DRAGON. M. Townsend

In the beginning, God created the heavens (including a little planet). The planet was a nice place, inhabited by plants and creatures that we now refer to as Prehistoric. At this time, the second in command, in heaven, was an angel called Lucifer; he was put in charge of this lovely planet. Lucifer, however, had an urge to take over heaven and rule all. So, with one third of the angels, he formed a rebellion. A strange plan, he was hopelessly outnumbered and was going up against God, who is infinitely more powerful than he. The result was that Lucifer and company were slung out and the little planet got enveloped in water and darkness.

Some time later, God decided to re-create the planet's life and orders. He spent six days planning and creating what we have today. He brought light back to the planet, separating the light and dark, calling them Day and Night. On day two, He separated water and mist to form Oceans below and Clouds in the sky. Next He pulled up some of the solids to form dry land again, as well as oceans, calling them "Earth" and Sea. He then caused all sorts of plant life to come into being, over the entire Earth. On day four, God sorted out the stars and our two main light sources, the Sun and Moon. Next day He created Fish and Birds, ordering the fish to stock the seas and the birds to get busy filling the air with more birds. Day six was a major epic, for on this day God created all sorts of animals, reptiles and various creepy crawlies to cover the Earth, but the most beautiful creature of all was "The Dragon".

Silky scales, that glistened with endless colours, covered his body. The Dragon could control the colour of his scales, giving either a reflection or a 3D moving picture of his choosing, putting modern histograms to shame. By imitating the background, he could make himself almost totally invisible, far more effectively than any chameleon. He had a long, lithe body, powerful talons that enabled him to grip onto any rock or tree, and two huge wings. The wings were leathery in nature but, being covered with those wonderful scales, were far more beautiful than any feathered creature could display.

One of his favourite tricks was to create a moving picture, on the underside of his wings, of the sky and clouds above him; this made it look as if he were flying without wings at all. Although his legs were fairly short, he could take off from flat ground by rearing up on his hind legs, his long body giving plenty of clearance for those wings to work the air. Some of the other animals claimed that the Dragon could breathe fire but this was a slight exaggeration. Admittedly the inside of a Dragon's mouth was bright red and it had a yellow forked tongue which made it look sightly flame-like, but it was his powerful personality and commanding voice that most creatures feared, or should I say - respected.

Unfortunately, for the Dragon, God did not stop there.... also, on day six, He created Man; an extremely complicated creature that looked very much like God himself. Not only that, God gave this new creature power over all the other creatures of the Earth, Sky and Seas. The Dragons, quite naturally in one chain of thought, were upset to say the least. Cosmetically, the Dragons were still the most beautiful creatures that God had created, and they didn't care much for Man's superior intelligence and emotions. The only order that Man had to obey was not to eat some fruit of a plant that God called the Tree of Conscience - not an enormous task of obedience in the Dragon's eyes. When the Man got lonely, God even gave him a female which he named Woman. Was God now ignoring his most beautiful creation?

To be continued in the next issue of UPDATE .... don't miss it!

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### **Discovery of the Year!!**

*I think I have at last discovered why Japanese Samurai seemed to spend so much time rushing around brandishing oversize meat skewers ... they were looking for Japanese design engineers!. It's a great shame they didn't find all of them!. Bring back the Samurai!!.* Paul.



## Transformed Man... Tony Shellard.

The Dragon is generally a hardy beast, but the most failure-prone element seems to be the transformer. A letter from one N. Bierly in the March 1986 issue of Dragon User suggest that a major cause of this is short circuits in the plug on the Dragon end of the lead. This tends to occur if you move the plug a lot, such as coiling the lead when packing it away, and may well never happen if you leave your machine in the same position all the time.

Cure is impossible, unless you fancy hand-winding the damn thing, but prevention is easy. Open the plug body, untwist the wires to prevent them from touching each other, and tighten the grub screws - but don't overdo it, or the wires will be crushed together and the insulation could split.

Better still, if you can solder convincingly, rewire the plug so that there is no flexible wire left bare i.e. the insulation covers right down to the pins, where it should be. One of mine had truly appalling joints with loose copper strands and blobs of solder all over the place. It's amazing that it never shorted in use prior to my clean-up. If you're really keen, you can follow Mr. Brierly's suggestion of putting fuses in the output lines.

I had the pleasure of meeting Brian Yeoman-Walker at an Ossett show a while ago. We talked of many things, including the trials and tribulations of hardware faults. A difference of opinion emerged; he averred that the Dragon's transformer has a fuse in it, and that many repairable units had probably been discarded as useless.

I, of course, knew better. I had burnt out a transformer (this is what happens when you forget to cut lines 2 and 4 on your home made printer lead) and stripped it for examination. Sadly, no user-serviceable parts inside, as they say; I was bugged. I broke out my spare, which had a ventilated case. I have removed the core before drilling a generous pattern of holes ("Swiss Cheese" springs to mind), so I knew what was and wasn't inside. There is absolutely no fuse in these things. Or so I thought.

A Dragon show is too civilised a place for an argument, so we let our differences lie and chatted on other subjects. Recently I bought another D32 from an ad in a local paper. It had a transformer with it, a major selling point as my Dragon:transformer ratio was getting uncomfortable. Having checked that it worked, I took the transformer to work to ventilate the case. Without a second thought I drilled out the rivets and opened it up. Lo and behold, third time lucky, a fuse.

This is not a fuse that everyone would recognise; it is a silver cylinder with a plastic cone at one end, and a wire off both ends. It is in fact a thermal fuse, rated at 117 degrees centigrade. They can be obtained from RS, part number 193-405, amongst other places. Farnell do a 121 degree type, part number 149-890, which would probably be an adequate replacement.

One point to note is that the body is not isolated, i.e. it is live to the mains and must be installed carefully. The one already fitted is wrapped in insulated tape; do NOT use Sellotape or whatever without checking its breakdown voltage. The metallic body may well short out the transformer terminals if carelessly positioned, hardly the point of a protective device.

In our own way we were both right; some transformers do indeed contain a fuse, so if you have any dud units lying about, take a look inside. It might only take one small component to get a Dragon up and running again, back where it belongs.

## Crisis, Baldrick, Crisis....!

As with the previous issue, this Update is looking rather emaciated. My thanks to those members who have written the articles to enable us to have this issue at all, but if you want to see more next time, then PLEASE write something for us. I have barely enough to use for issue 98 in December, so if you still want 1995 to be the year of the Dragon, then consider doing something to help us all, NOW. SW.

*But I've a Cunning Plan, sir; if we just send out blank pages and tell everyone it's a DIY issue, they can write it themselves and we won't need to do any work.*

R.I.P. Dave Riley.

Update was down to twelve pages, and as suggested I asked myself "what should I write about?". The size of our newsletter suggested that this piece should be an obituary for the Dragon, but I suspect that the situation is not quite like that and that Update is a victim of the success of Up-2-Date, the NDUG disc magazine that is published those months when there is no Update. A number of us contribute to Up-2-Date and Ray Smith, the Editor and a contributor, ensures optimum storage so that each single sided disc magazine has zero bytes free. It is surprising how many Dragon specific articles and programmes are being prepared now for Up-2-Date. The disc is a splendid medium to write for and it must unintentionally "poach" articles from Update. Up-2-Date is more hi-tech than its paper sister. It has to be to cope with the volume of material published. Contributions are better submitted on OS9 or DragonDos disc than on paper so that the only mistakes published can be blamed on the author. The magazine is produced by a Dragon alone and there is no PC around to get things snarled up. Articles can be written on most Dragon WPs, subject to the limitation of line length to about 48 characters. Then of course there are the programmes. I have taken Up-2-Date since its first issue and have benefited enormously. Off the top of my head I recall Eclipse, which must be the ultimate PMODE4 pixel editor for the D64, and Analyser, a spreadsheet. Both programmes, together with many others from the same source, have joined my collection of most frequently used programmes. Every issue contains five PMODE4 pictures visible from within the magazine, which have to be saved in compressed form to conserve disc space. A routine has been issued to repack the pictures as standard 6153 byte files.

To those who have not yet seen the light I suggest that you get your old but still powerful Dragon out of that cupboard, renew the NDUG subscription, and also fork out for a few copies of Up-2-Date. Perhaps the prices are unfashionable ... anyone who knows anything about computers realises that anything costing less than £50.00 is useless, but by now YOU should know better!. I understand that by the time you read this there will have been published three or four compilation discs of software from Up-2-Date. The discs are worth far more than Mario or Sonic, but they will only cost you a few quid. Contact address for Up-2-Date is on the back page. Do not miss the chance.

Update is vital to the continuing existence of the Group as a whole. Not all NDUG members take Up-2-Date and there may even be some who have no disc drive (*about 25% of the current membership. Paul G.*). Up-2-Date has put new life into the Dragon which could attract lapsed users ... but only Update can tell them about it!.

Slimline again

*There still isn't enough material for us to make up a full length issue of Update, so I'm afraid you'll have to make do with twelve pages again this time around. Sorry, and all that, but other than boring you to death with a couple of extra pages of Grade One Garbage there isn't much I can do about it ... and there are limits to how much garbage even I can invent without repetition!. I suppose the real cause of the problem is the greatly reduced membership base ... one can't really expect a couple of hundred members to produce the same amount of material for publication that a couple of thousand used to do, but even allowing for that factor, there is still the point that all it takes to make up full length Updates is for a dozen of you to write a page each once every two years!. Don't give me that ancient line about "I don't know what to write", PLEASE! .... Steve and I never know what to write either, but we've been doing it for more years than enough, and even if the quality sometimes leaves a little to be desired, the quantity always gets produced!. If we can do it, why can't you? OK, so Up-2-Date gets a share of the material too ... but don't forget that the original concept of Up-2-Date was to provide an outlet for material that was unsuitable for Update for reasons of length or format ... not nick the lot!, so don't leave us short and then complain about the reduced size. Paul Grade.*



The Late, Late Bit . . . . .

You think I'm going to have a moan at you for not rushing off to Mike's Liverpool Show, don't you? .... well, you're completely wrong, because I'm writing this a couple of weeks BEFORE the show, so I haven't a clue how many will be there, or whether Mike will be cursing Dragon owners or praising them in his next piece, so you're safe for the moment at least.

Actually I'm not sure I should be writing anything at all .... the way things have been going for the past week or three I could do with a brain transplant, or at least some of that Artificial Intelligence stuff that Mike James and the rest of the "experts" used to be so keen on. Let me give you a simple example ... one evening a couple of weeks ago I had to make up three "Emulator" discs to send out, so I carefully formatted three 3.5" PC discs, even more carefully created the necessary directories on each of them (I even checked that), and proceeded to transfer the appropriate files over from my H/D. Simple, no?, any idiot could do it? .... not THIS idiot!, because a few days later one of the discs was returned with a rather plaintive "I've found the disc, I've found the directories, but where are the bloody programs?!" type note!. It takes a real Grade One Idiot to save the files to one of the discs twice, and miss one disc out completely!. Now I'm sure that none of YOU would ever do anything like that ... or would you?. Actually, while on the subject (more or less) of discs, some of you may have discovered a problem or two with the current Up-2-Date discs. The one I got from Nev first refused to boot and when it was eventually persuaded to do so rewarded my efforts with a flock of assorted RF and CC errors. Having checked things out it appears that this disc at least was suffering from being a bit too tight in its sleeve .... initial cure was to put it in the drive wrong side up and type DIR, just to spin it in reverse, which cured 99% of all known faults, and a "stick on" hub ring cured it completely, so if you have the same problem try the above cures before suggesting new places for Nev to insert the discs!.

Have you noticed how all the old computer mythology is starting up again now? ... remember, way back in the dim and distant days when the D32 was first invented, there were all those predictions about how there would be a computer in every home, and everyone would do all their shopping, banking, and even working, via their keyboard without all the strain of venturing out into the wild and wicked world? ..... all the same old tales are back again in a big way, and just like before it's all supposed to be happening "within the next five years" .... it doesn't work, though, I told both my machines to pay a million quid into my account, but they still haven't done it. I spent hours trying to persuade my PC to go downstairs and fix the rust spots on my van .... but they're still there, and the D64 still hasn't run down to the shops for the vodka refill I wanted either. The other old faithful myth is back again too .... MegaGenius Brat who writes 5 Gigabyte game before breakfast, starts own software company and retires a multi-millionaire at lunch time. Why does no one ever ask where said brat got the ten grand's worth of hardware plus software from in the first place?, or how he learned to become such an expert programmer within a couple of days of getting his first computer?, or how, if he's so good, he hasn't been kidnapped by the Japanese?. How come no one ever asks how office workers now working from home are supposed to pay their phone bill if their machines are permanently on line to the firm's mainframe?. Yet another Great Computer Myth is back as well ... the Phantom Hacker, age 13, who spends all his time breaking into NASA and NORAD systems to start WW3 .... but how come Mummy Hacker never seems to notice that the family phone bill has increased by a couple of million pounds while Junior Hacker was trying to bust codewords?, and who bought him the 486/60 with ultra expensive modem card anyway?. I suppose we're as likely to find the answer to THOSE questions as we are to find the mysterious person who voted Conservative at the last election!. It's the same with the "new" myth, Computer Pornography .... I mean, I know a lot of computers get turned on by peculiar people, but how can people, however peculiar, get turned on by a computer?!. It's almost as daft as all that rubbish about "sex on TV" ... I mean, just WHAT can you do while balanced on top of a 2" screen Sony without falling off?. I give up!. *Paul G.*



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STILL A SMALL UPDATE!!

FOR THE SAME REASON AS LAST TIME!. It's quite simple really ... we can only print what we get sent in, and unless YOU write it and send it to us, WE wont get it, and NO-ONE will be able to read it in the next issue. So maybe you are happy to get less for your subscription money? ... if so, that's fine by me ... less work involved, but if not why not DO something about it ... you can't leave it ALL to "someone else" .... "someone-else" happens to be YOU!!.

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