

THE GREENEST STATION IN THE NATION

WHO'S MARTIN CLEGHORN'S DREAM BED-TIME COMPANION?
WHERE'S THE NEXT DORIS EXTRAVAGANZA?
HOW MUCH LONGER WILL I BE DAFT ENOUGH TO KEEP DOING THIS FOR YOU LOT?
READ IT FIRST IN

#####RADIO DRAGON#####

New series - edition 6

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(MBX 636705230)

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Art Editor.....Ian Ferguson

#####RADIO DRAGON#####

A pretty packed edition this week, mainly thanks to some dedicated keyboard hammering by our Technical Editor, Martin Cleghorn.

In Edition 3, we published the results of fascinating work by Tim Hayton, which sent us all dashing to the keyboard. Tim invited comments and further investigation of his "Mega-Hires" phenomenon, and Martin's the first to shed some extra light on Tim's ground-breaking work.

I promise this is the only time I'll ask...some time this week (i.e. before Friday midnight) please leave me an MBX (636705230) telling me that you logged on to Radio Dragon.

DRAWING A NEW CONCLUSION
By Martin Cleghorn
#####

I must praise Tim Hayton on a good bit of computer hacking with his Super-Mega-Hires program.

What Tim has done is to fool the Dragon into believing that it's in PMODE0, while, in fact, it's drawing in PMODE4.

The result is that the PMODE4 screen is split into 4 1.5k mini-screens. No extra resolution, I'm afraid - still only a 6k screen - but the effect is like using a finer pen nib. Where PMODE0 would leave 4 pixels lit, this program only lights one.

Thus the drawing is a little lumpy, but what Tim has really found is a way of drawing finer lines, and a 4x split screen.

I'm sure Tim could develop his find with a few extra Basic keywords to bring new life to the Dragon's DRAWing capability.

How about using the 50 Htz IRQ routine to swop the drawing quadrant,

so circles and other designs could be drawn simultaneously?

Keep it up, Tim!

DRAGON USER LATEST

Dragon User have agreed to supply me with six copies of the magazine each month, so that I can retail individual copies for the benefit of those - such as the youngster whose letter we published recently - who can't afford a subscription.

The bad news is that the terms they're allowing me mean that we'll be charging 1.40 a copy, including post and packing.

The publisher, Jenny Ireland, is now referring to it as a "newsletter" rather than a "magazine" - so that's official.

She says: "The newsletter, while it is subscription only, is providing exactly the same service as before on better quality paper. I think it looks very good and a lot of Dragon owners think so too.

"The response to the subscription request has been excellent. We are still getting copious amounts of mail and once this slackens off, we will start a promotional drive to encourage more Dragon owners to take out subscriptions."

Ms Ireland says 2,000 people have taken out subscriptions since the decision was made to remove DU from the news-stands. Advertising Manager Simon Langston's view is that "about 100" subs a week are being received. About 2,500 readers were believed to be subscribers before DU disappeared from the shops.

Ms Ireland has promised to release official readership figures in September.

She says: "We have had no complaints about the move to a subscription-only newsletter."

So there!

Peaksoft refused to pay the advertising bill which DU presented for the first subscription-only issue, and although this invoice has now been cut by 75%, DU intend to charge all future advertisements at the old rate. For this reason, Peaksoft, who have been one of the longest-standing supporters of the magazine, have reluctantly decided to cease advertising in DU after the next (August) issue.

A Peaksoft spokesman explained: "We send a copy of our list with every order received, and if anyone doesn't know where we are by now, the advertising in Dragon User in the past three and a half years hasn't done much good, has it?"

CLEGGERS CRACKS IT!

Got a problem? MBX Martin Cleghorn on 919992757 and he'll

have a crack at it.

>Is it possible to change the background colour on the Dragon by hardware modification?-TH

<The simple answer would be "no", but there is never a simple "no can do" with computers, is there?

The Dragon uses the Motorola 6847 Video Display Generator (VDG) which contains its own 64 CHRS set. I guess Motorola designed it for small memory computers so that only 0.5k is needed to support the text screen, and a maximum of 6k for hi-res. Way out of date now!

The VDG is controlled by one of the Peripheral Interface Adaptors (PIAs) and seeks out data from RAM under software control from the SAM chip.

It's the way the SAM allows access to RAM, so as not to interfere with normal Dragon house-keeping, that's the stumbling block.

Any replacement VDG will not work without extensive changes in the Dragon.

Motorola did promise a slot-in replacement, but when the 80 column chip came, it required extensive changes to the PCB to get it to work.

There is one glimmer of hope. As I mentioned, the VDG has its own CHRS set. There is the E/I control line to the chip, which selects internal or external character generator.

If E were selected, an external character set could be used. This would require quite a bit of design, but could lead to an upper and lower case screen for the Dragon. Anyone interested in following it up?

For those of you who are really fed up with the green screen, the following program will give you a black background screen. It slows Basic down slightly.

```
10 FORL=&H7D00 TO&H7D12:READ D$:D=VAL("&H"+D$):POKE L,D: NEXT
20 DATABE,4,0,EC,84,84,BF,C4, BF,ED,81,8C,6,0,2F,F3,7E, 9D,3D
30 POKE&H10D,&H7D:POKE&H10E,0 (or whatever address you put the code.
```

In m/c:

```
LDX $400
@LOOP LDD ,X
ANDA #$BF
ANDB #$BF
STD ,X++
CMPX #$600
BLE @LOOP
JMP $9D3D
```

It works by ANDing all the text screen with \$BF, thus setting bit 6 to 0 (black background character). The routine is called by putting its address in the IRQ vector so that it is called 50 times a second.

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At present, Andrew, of 13 Parry Jones Close, Blaina, Gwent, has not announced a launch date, and is confining his efforts to trying to charm free copies of games from software houses, and joysticks from Peaksoft.

Peaksoft's opinion of the general competence of reviewers was reinforced by a telephone call from a young lady employed by MSX Computing, who had been asked to review a game, but did not know how to load a program into the computer.

Since then, Peaksoft have met all requests for review items with a (usually) polite refusal.

Anyone ever come across any good 24-hour Spanish courses?

One of Eurohard's distributors left a message on our answering machine on Saturday. It was in English - well, sort of. I can make out that he wants to plunder 1,000 of something or another from our bulging Dragon stock-room, but for the life of me, I can't make out what he wants!

I don't understand why these foreigners can't all learn to speak English properly. When we go to France, they all start gabbling away in foreign. I've got this theory that they only do it to be awkward when we're around - after all, no-one could possibly actually THINK in French, could they?

HOW ABOUT.....

How about a plastic case to house the Dragon keyboard?

You'd just need a length of multi-core cable, with a 16-pin socket/plug at each end, so that the keyboard can be used a few yards away from the Dragon/TV/recorder/disc drive/ printer, etc...even on your knee.

A second keyboard could even be connected so that both would work at the same time - not a lot of people know that!

I could even take the Dragon to bed with me!-MC

Harry adds: I've got the keyboards, the cable and the connectors...all we need now is the cases! I do appreciate that Dragon owners are keen and dedicated to their machines, and I'm also aware that it's not unknown for people to fantasise about possible night-time companions, but...well, I'll say no more!

NEW SHOW DATE FIXED

The Kent show exclusively announced in Radio Dragon will be held on 1st November at Maidstone Methodist Church Hall, from 10am-4pm.

And after all the fun we had in Cardiff, we just had to go back!

