

The Newsletter of the National Dragon User's Group

DRAGON



UPDATE

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THE GAFFER'S BIT

Quite a short Bit this issue, mainly due to Our Editor getting all carried away (no, NOT literally) again. All to the good, really, as I can't think of anything to write that I haven't written several times before ... it's the effect that this time of year always has on me when after six months of "Christmas Sales" we eventually get advance warning of the TV "Christmas Best of The Worst of the Repeats Specials", every shop is littered with the Dreaded Plastic Christmas Trees (Bargain at only £1.99), and all the usual garbage. So, just for once I'll confine myself to saying thanks to all of you who renewed your Group membership in the last year (that was enough of you to ensure another year of Group pseudo life!), to those who sent us material for Update, to those of you who DID make it to Mike's Liverpool Show, those who actually BOUGHT things from us!, and of course the Up-2-Date subscribers as well.

A distinct lack of venom in all this, isn't there? I must be slipping, but don't worry, I'll be back on form by the next issue, cursing everyone and everything like a warlock on piece-work, so make the best of it while you can!.

Have a good Christmas, and a MUCH better year in 1995.

Paul Grade.

The Editor Cometh...

...with zero of any interest to report, as per usual. I seem to have discovered some sort of life-span for the Dragon, as the past twelve months have been a graveyard for certain parts of my Dragon system. Current tally stands at one DOS cartridge, one drive, and now two (yes, count them) keyboards, with thanks to HRH Chairman for the loan of the one currently being pounded by my fingers. It is with some sadness that I have to report that this is the Christmas issue, which means once again that you have to spend your overdraft on boxes of cards to send to people you haven't seen in ten years just to make sure that they still exist and haven't moved/emigrated/teleported into another time zone just to get away from all the cards they keep receiving from strange people they haven't seen in ten years. And how kind, I thought, how kind of Asda to keep us informed on the television about how there's only X weeks 'till Christmas day and by the way you can get some great bargains at Asda these days much cheaper than Tesco. What with the season of joy and goodwill and all that, none of us at Group HQ can think of much on the Dragon scene that is particularly joyous, so to ensure that NDUG can welcome in the new year with at least one issue, please consider spending SOME of your Christmas holiday putting pen to paper and writing an article for me, instead of spending ages writing cards to people you haven't seen in ten years etc etc etc. And remember. With the National Lottery, It Could Be You. SW .

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NDUG - Everything we do is written by you.

PEEKING THE DRAGON. MIKE STOTT

14th October 1994 - May I take this opportunity to wish each member of NDUG "A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR." Ah well, that is the pleasantries over, I am afraid to say. The Blacklow Brow Show was the last ever Dragon Show. It appears that you do not want to have a show, despite what many of you say. Let me tell those of you who did not come what you missed. In the middle of the school hall was the BRING AND BUY STALL which had been requested by quite a number of people. Most of these did not bother to attend so all we had on there were some items of software which were donated by a couple of very generous members, thanks to them. Also in the middle were Chris Nicholson and his wife who were selling mainly non-Dragon items. (There I got your name right, didn't I?) They have been stalwarts at Ossett Shows for many years. Turning to the left as one entered the door was Tony Shellard running the Graphics Library stand. Tony had paid his entrance fee many months in advance, as I knew he would, but then kindly volunteered to run this stand at very short notice as nobody else would. Those who did not come to the show missed Tony's stunning new hairstyle - no, I will not tell you what it is like, it was worth the entrance fee just to see it though. Next to Tony was Ian Jones with his midi interface. Although he had a few teething problems when he set up, I am assured by people who were there that this was a very interesting display of what the Dragon can do. Mike Townsend was next, having travelled up from Cheltenham in record breaking time that morning to arrive at the show just after me. He still supports the Dragon, managing to find a monitor lead with minutes to spare before the start of the show. Brian O'Connor was running the PSE stand which filled one side of the school hall. Initially we were to have a smaller room but Brian rang me just a couple of weeks before the show asking for a large stand. Although I did not get time to visit any of the stands you can imagine the pile of bargains that were lined up on all these tables. The fourth side of the hall began with a fantastic selection of virtually new items which belonged to Brian Yeoman-Walker, whom many of you will remember from his helping me at Ossett. I had agreed to try to sell as much as I could for his widow, Jane, and believe me there was some really good gear on there. Up2date was represented by yours truly as was NDUG. I also had a table myself selling a few items which are now surplus to requirements. No, I am not quitting the Dragon scene!. I can assure you that there were only bits and pieces on display. With such a large show available you are probably wondering why it is going to be the last. Advance ticket sales numbered eighteen which was quite promising as I expected more to turn up on the day. Only six more members arrived and, although we reduced the entrance fee to encourage non-Dragon people through the door there were very few who came in and purchased anything. Brian O'Connor said after the show that he would never again go to a Dragon show. Mike Townsend was philosophical as usual and said he never expects to make money at a show. Ian Jones wrote me a letter thanking me for "making the effort to put on the last ever Dragon Show." He sold nothing and the only promise of an order has not materialised. The school had cancelled the Car Boot to make room for the fair which cancelled on the morning of the Fete so they were glad of our contribution for the hall. Although I only sold a small amount of Brian's goodies it raised one hundred and six pounds. The group sold very little in the way of software being mainly back copies of Up2date, some examples of graphics from the library, and the Up2date compilations which raised a fair amount of interest. All in all I think you can safely say it was a disaster. Thanks to Nora and David who helped me out and to those others who helped, especially with Brian's stand. I must also express my gratitude to Jonathan and George Cartwright who came along to give their support even though they have left the Dragon scene completely. Thanks also to those who paid to come along and tried to keep Dragon shows alive. S. Hurstbourne, 230 Newcombe Road, Birmingham, B21 8BY (0121-507-1104) has transferred WP files from EA to a Psion Series 3A using POKE423,1 and wants to know how to do the opposite. Malcolm Cowen, 23 Bristol Avenue, Levenshulme, Manchester, M19 3NU is looking for any educational software for his wife Beryl who uses a Dragon at the school where she teaches. (Tel. 0161-225-4674).

GOD CREATED DRAGON. M. Townsend. (Cont.)

Lucifer, now known as Satan, was very quick to pick up on the fact that the Dragon was not happy with these arrangements and took no time in persuading him that, should the Man and Woman displease God, then God's immediate choice of rulers for Earth would be the Dragons. Satan finally won the Dragon over by giving him great skills of craftiness, to aid his quest for superiority over the Man. Armed with his fiery speech, and his new skills, the Dragon watched and waited. Finally he saw his chance, the Woman was walking in the centre of God's garden, near the Tree of Conscience - the Dragon alight gently in the tree. "So" said the Dragon "God won't allow you to eat any of the lovely fruits in His garden!". "Oh we can eat what we want" said the Woman "It's only the fruit on this tree that we mustn't eat. God says that we mustn't even touch it or we'll die". She had made an error, God had not said that they shouldn't touch it, only not to eat it - the Dragon pounced. "That's rubbish" said the Dragon, truthfully (for the Woman had stated something that was untrue) "You won't die. God knows, only too well, that the day you eat this, you'll be like Him, being able to tell the difference between Good and Evil". The power of the Dragon prevailed, seeing that the fruit was good to eat, she ate some and also took some for her husband. However, once they had eaten the fruit, the wonderful glow that had previously covered their bodies vanished, and suddenly they realised that they were now naked. They now knew good and evil because, for the first time, they had sinned. Ashamed by their new appearance, they strung fig leaves around their hips to cover themselves. Later that day, God came into the garden for his daily chat with the Man. Not seeing him around, He called out "Why are you hiding?". "I hid because I didn't want you to see me naked" said the Man. "Who said you were naked?" said God "Have you eaten some of the fruit that I warned you about?". "It was that Woman you gave me" said the Man, trying to pass the blame onto both God and the Woman, "She gave me some". God turned to the Woman, "How could you do such a thing?". The Woman now tried to pass the blame onto a beast that she was supposed to be superior to - "The Dragon said it would be OK to eat it, he tricked me". God now turned on His beautiful Dragon, "You will be singled out from all other creatures of the Earth, Mankind's offspring and your offspring will be enemies for ever and you'll get around by crawling on your belly for the rest of your existence. As for you two, I curse the Earth for your sake and you'll have pain and hard labour all of your life - now get out of my garden, all of you, and don't come back". The Dragon was devastated, his legs had gone, his wings had gone and his fire had gone for ever. He crawled silently away, hating Satan for tricking him and hating Man for just being there in the first place.

Epilogue: In the past six thousand years, we have had many battles with the Dragon. God once enlisted his services to destroy some rebellious Israelites, in the desert. In more modern times, many have come to feel sorry for this once great beast, naming cars after his Cobra family and even missiles of death after his Sidewinder family. More intelligent beings have remembered his past powers, and his fire, and named a Computer after him; a Computer that may be small but is powerful, has outlived all it's rivals, is still superior to many modern beasts and is still obedient to the commands of Mankind. God has even looked upon some of the Dragons with favour, increasing the numbers of his Adder family. He has caused several county councils to build picnic areas, by our roadsides, and furnish them with benches and tables made from Logs. We, quite naturally, assumed that this was to give the picnic areas a more pleasant and rustic look. But it has been noticed that, when Man is not around to disturb them, the Adders climb to the table tops in order to bask in the heat of the sun. Being cold blooded, the warmer they get, the more they breed and are now increasing in numbers. God has proved to us, beyond all doubt, that Adders can't Multiply without Log Tables.

** And with puns like that I'm not at all sure that Clan Townsend should continue to multiply either!. Paul.

Dragon On Video . . . by The Editor!

As an indication of just how desperate we are for material, here I am writing some trash myself. One easy way to get your Dragon on video is with the aid of a video camera. Film ten seconds or so of your favourite machine, and send it in to "You've Been Framed". Given the quality of stuff that Beadle usually shows on there, you could easily be in with a chance of getting a load of money - which you would then donate to the Group, of course. However, if you fancy using your Dragon for a slightly more serious purpose, say putting titles on much-treasured family tapes, then here's how.

All you really need to do is connect your Dragon up to your video cassette recorder, and this is achieved quite simply. Either:

1. If your VCR has some auxiliary input sockets, then you can use the Dragon's monitor output socket. The VCR will probably have either phono or BNC type connectors, so what you do is buy a 5-pin DIN -to- phono adaptor (easily available), plug the DIN end into the Dragon monitor output (next to the power supply) and plug the phono/BNC end into your VCR. Then, on your VCR, select the auxiliary input setting (as per your manual), turn your Dragon on, and there you are - you should have a clear Dragon picture. If your VCR only has the dreaded Scart sockets, then it is still possible, but you will need a Scart to phono connector to enable you to hook up to the DIN monitor output on the Dragon.

2. If you don't have any such inputs on your VCR, then panic not. All you do is unplug the aerial lead from the aerial or antenna in socket on the back of your VCR; plug the normal TV lead into the Dragon, and then plug the other end of this lead into the aerial/antenna in socket on the back of your VCR. You will then need to tune your video in to the Dragon picture, as with any normal TV station. It ought to be around UHF 35, or something like that. You might find that the Dragon outputs on the same UHF frequency as your video, in which case you will need to detune one of them to another setting. Most videos have adjustable modulators via a tiny screw on the back, so check your manual - although if you do this, remember that you will have to re-tune your television set in order to pick up the new frequency of your video. Still with me? Good. Once you have got yourself a picture on screen, what you do next is really up to you. You can design your own screens with your own methods, or you can use programs like Rainbow Writer, or even the Group's DTP program, to create titles with big letters and graphic designs. Ideal for brightening up your home videos, and certainly ideal for filling up some space in Update.

(**The above information is printed courtesy of GradeWood International, Video Entertainment division.**)

Problem Corner . . .

So, OK "Experts", come on and give me information. I happen to be one of the 25% who are not disc drive compatible but would dearly love to join in. All the 'bargains' seem to be on sale far away by people without telephones or access to post offices. I thought I'd taken a big step last week by obtaining a BBC disc drive, but as it is powered from the BBC power pack, HOW DO I GET IT TO WORK? Everyone contacted says "Oh yes, we sold our last one of those three years ago don't know how you will manage to get it to work now though", so does anybody have any ideas other than "send it to me at [other end of space] and I will frighten you with a bill that far exceeds its value on the possibility that I can botch it". Why can't experts be honest and say 'no can do, cost you too much, go and buy a compatible drive from ?????? for a lot less/same money and give your brain a rest'. Well, there you go. Any Dragons left in North Yorkshire? Any for sale in lofts/cupboards? IS ANYBODY REALLY STILL THERE?. D.T.Bowden.

Ideas and practical solutions to the usual address in time for the next issue, please...SW

*** Disc drives just need a 5v and 12v DC power supply, simple to make, or get a kit for about a fiver from Greenweld Electronics, 27, Park Road, Southampton, Hants. Paul.

How I Use My Dragon. R. Thorburn

The Dragon has been my faithful workhorse for eleven years, my first D32 being purchased in September 1983. A double disk system was added a couple of years ago. I am no expert programmer, but appreciate the amount of work put in to the programs published in Update and U2D. How did I get involved with the Dragon? I was involved with a group of disabled people who used a D32 for typing practice, the keyboard being the same as the Apple II, the main computer at the time. And how do I use it?...simple. Word-Processing is the main activity via TeleWriter and Visitext Deluxe. During my time at college the Dragon and TeleWriter received a lot of use, as the program is ideal for doing essays and summaries and improving my scribbled notes. Doing it this way, at least the lecturers could comprehend the resulting script, and I could understand what I has written in the first place!. At this time the WP, like everything else, was tape-base, but as the costs of disk systems fell it became more economical to invest in a disk drive, to which I upgraded with the Dragon approaching its tenth birthday. I have not regretted it. TeleWriter is also used to compile mailshots and forms for organisations I am involved with, which in the past would have been typed up on a typewriter and stencil. Using TeleWriter, I now type up various reports for the local church magazine, while someone else edits the resulting pages prior to printing. The greatest advantage in all this is that the previous relevant file (providing one had been created) is used as a Master, reducing the time taken to produce a new one. My database is DRS, used quite a lot holding name and address files. My largest task is the update and print run of 600+ labels for the local Former Pupils' Association for their annual magazine. The run, from seven separate files, takes a total of fifty minutes, including the disk accessing and the time taken to reset the print function, which has to be redefined for each file. Databases for the Dragon were few and far between, even in the heady days of a high user base, and DRS has a sort facility which my previous tape-based database from MST did not possess, even though such a routine is present in the program listing. My newest venture is DTP, and I am still experimenting to find the best uses for the Group's DTP program. At this stage in the Dragon's history, spares could be a problem; thankfully, most spares are available from either traders or from Group sources, and long may this situation continue. While spares are still available, I see no advantage in dropping the Dragon in favour of a PC, for example; the extra memory may be handy on some occasions, for example to create spectacular graphic displays, title screens etc, and this is all very well, but generally speaking the extra memory on a PC is also used to enforce copyright protection, which is not a real problem in the Dragon market. As to the future?, well I shall continue to use the Dragon as my main computer as long as the users and traders are prepared to support the Dragon. I might even add further programs as time goes on; with the Dragon, you do not need a mortgage to afford a new program, another brownie point in our favour. Generally, it seems to be the case that those who already have a Dragon will probably upgrade theirs, whilst at the other end of the market, secondhand Dragons will be a cheap means of entry to the joys of computing for either those on a tight budget, or those who want to experiment with, for example, the adaptations of Jon Bird and others, and perhaps get an utterly different experience from that provided by the 286/386/486 PCs for example. Long live the fire breathing, roaring Dragon!

What's the odds?!

Maybe it's just my nasty, suspicious mind, or does anyone else think our Great National Lottery is a Megacon?!. With the true odds being somewhere in the region of sixty million to one against winning the Star Prize, why do the Political Personages think I'm likely to waste my ill gotten gains on a ticket?, when my local betting shop offers me FAR superior odds on Martians landing before lunch time next Sunday, Saddam Hussien becoming next Prime Minister of England, me living for another 500 years, and an honest politician appearing in Parliament?. Maybe I should try an accumulator on the above and REALLY clean up!. Paul Grade.

1983 & All That... Sotos Mandalos.

I have been thinking about writing some kind of historical facts since the birth of the Dragon 32, using 'Dragon User' for reference. These articles don't have to be long or many; the best thing to do is provide some information about the Dragon since we are becoming more and more dependent on the PC and Microsoft - indeed, Dragon Data did in fact use Microsoft Basic version 1.00 which was later enhanced to provide support for the IBM PC on peripherals such as disk drives etc...don't forget that the original IBM PC was in fact a 64K version with Microsoft Basic which had support for a cassette recorder! If Dragon Data had the same success as the IBM PC, our Dragon 32s would cost a lot more than 25.00, I can assure you. Anyhow, here is how the story goes. In this article, I will cover the year 1983, starting in October, when Dragon User was about 6 issues old and the editor was still Graham Cunningham, with technical questions answered by Cathy Hyde and not Brian Cadge. In the editorial Graham mentioned that "it was business as usual" for Dragon Data, following the announcement of a 2.5 million pound investment package for the company. Also, MD Tony Clarke was stepping down to make way for senior executives from GEC. As you can see, the Dragon had a turbulent life as soon as it was born. At that time, the Dragon 64 was announced but did not hit the retail market until later in the year, and what a disappointment it was for GEC that it never became what the PC did for IBM. Hindsight is a wonderful thing, but I do wonder how much anyone could or would change if we were to go back in time. So, the £2.5 million gave enough stimulation for new Dragon products (that never saw the light of day...), companies like Premier, Datapen, Trojan, Compusense, MST, Eurosoft, Diand, Copice, Alligata, DACC, Wintersoft, PSS, Salamander, Microdeal and others were supplying all their products to the Dragon world and they were all doing just fine. Even Boots were still selling Dragon software, and the Top Ten had stuff like Dragon Data's "Mountain" (oh God...) and Microdeal's classic "King" and "Frogger". By November, the D32 had started to be marketed in the US, and if sales had truly taken off then some kind of a Dragon-like computer could still be in existence. However, a lot of things and options still had to be improved, and by now the 64 had hit the market along with the OS9 operating system, and all software written for the 32 could run on the 64, which was great. And then there was better news...Dragon users were going to have a choice of operating systems, for despite the fact that Dragon Data had opted for OS9, Compusense was offering Flex. And we all had the choices...now we only have Microsoft Windows! Tony Clarke was replaced by Brian Moore from GEC, who started well in pledging support for the existing D32 users, and the code name of Dragon 128 was mentioned a few times. There may have been a prototype once, but no-one ever saw it apart from the engineers who made it. Brian Cadge took over the technical side of Dragon User, and offered his expertise and knowledge to all of us for a number of years. The similarities of Tandy's Color Computer may have helped or confused matters (and sales), but with Brian Moore in the driving seat, things were doing rather well. And even better for me, "The King" was still on top of the charts.

SOFTWARE SEARCH (1). MIKE STOTT.

Many of you will have noticed that I made no mention of Stuart Beardwood and the PD library in my report of the show in PEEKING THE DRAGON (54). This was because he was unable to attend.

Stuart had a tumour removed a while ago and has lost the sight in his right eye for an unknown period. the treatment, unfortunately, has had side effects which has left him very up and down. My family and I visited him and he would love to hear from people who have got software to donate to the PD library and those who want to order stuff from it. For his own use he would like a printer driver for a deskjet printer. Somebody must be using one successfully so please share your secret with others. That is what these articles are going to be about - helping people obtain software that they have been unable to find. Are you looking for a particular title, or software that will do a particular job? Let me know and I will pass on your pleas through this column.

How I Use My Dragon. Alex Taylor

I have been interested in the Dragon for many years, since I started reading the Input series, originally bought for the household's Spectrum Plus. But the first one I got was only a couple of years ago, from a local car boot sale, consisting of a keyboard unit, and costing £2.00. I owned it for about a year and couldn't use it: no leads, PSU, manuals, tapes, or anything! I tried sticking different power supplies in it after looking at the socket and the board; I got a black screen, a clicking relay, and what I thought was a Dragon that I'd killed. Then! At another car boot sale: a Dragon, manual, leads, 2 games, 2 pairs of joysticks, and the important power supply unit, for something like £20.00. I plugged it in at home, and it worked. I tried my old machine, which I thought I'd broken, and it worked too! But now I'd got the systems working, I'd only got two games. I typed out some of the listings from Input, such as the excellent sound sampler and interrupt driven clock, but I was lacking in games. The last machine I bought was from a classified advert in a local paper, and consisted of a D32, printer lead, PSU, lead, manuals, magazines, books, and loads of games. This is the best one so far; some of the games such as Chuckie Egg and Speed Racer are really good. Since then, I have bought some PSUs, a set of dodgy tape leads, and some more games. I would very much like some expansions for my machines, either a D64 or an upgrade for one of my 32s, a DOS cartridge, more software, wordprocessor, utilities etc. My main interest in software is word processing, graphics, and DTP. I have seen the adverts for the NDUG DTP system, and I am very interested, also the graphics package etc. I intended to buy my DOS when PSE had a sale, but missed out. In reference to Update 97, I would like to see a mouse and software for the Dragon, as I use Archimedes at school, and have mouse systems on my BBCs and Spectrums. There are standard mice systems for the QL which I also have, but not for the Dragon. Nowadays, mice are fairly useful. A good idea would be a desktop system for discs with icon-driven systems and menus for file copying, renaming, a calculator and clock etc, and (possibly a bit adventurous) a D64 using 32K as a Dragon 32 and using the other 32K for the DTP system, being able to toggle between standard operation as a D32 and the desktop, like a multitasking system. Since the Dragon world is at an all time low at the moment, perhaps someone could get working on these ideas and give us all a boost?. My opinion of the Dragon, compared to my other machines (BBC B and Master, Spectrum, ZX81, QL, TI99/4A, Oric, Atari 65XE, MSX, Vic 20, Electron) is one of a "solid" computer. It is very nice to use, despite the text screen display and relatively poor graphics capability, it is fast compared to some others, and the keyboard is nice to use. The problem is the noise from the huge empty casing. No-one in my house likes it when I decide to use it because it is simply too loud! Being very adventurous, why doesn't someone invent an expansion to fill the D32's case? Inside you could fit a serial interface, mouse interface, DOS, a 3.5" drive or two, 128K of RAM and an 80-column text driver. (**Internal DOS adaptor kits are available from J.Sutcliffe in Kent - see the small ads. pages. A serial interface is, of course, available free of charge on the D64, which compared to the 32, has a keyboard which is simply delicious...SW**). I don't actually use the Dragon a lot, possibly because of my lack of software and add-ons. This letter is being typed on my Master 128, which I use mainly as a wordpro because I have a double disc drive, and it has 80-column text, built in wordpro and other software in ROM, and much more memory. But it's not built as well as the Dragon, and the keyboard's always faulty. If it sounds to you like I have waffled on a lot, it's because I have. I love the old 8-bits, and I certainly don't want them to die out. The Dragon is an exceptional machine with many strong points. It would be a great shame if it did die out because nobody could be bothered to write an article about their machine.

*** I hardly like to mention it, but Half Meg D32's are not unknown, nor are hard drive Dragons; meeces don't really NEED a driver circuit, standard serial is fine, but they DO need driver routines IN THE SOFTWARE!, and disc drives inside a Dragon would fry themselves and would still need an external PSU. Noise from the casing?!, there shouldn't BE any!!. Paul Grade.

Disc Repair Experience. D. Cadman

NOTE: This article is based on discs formatted single sided 40T. Adjustments will be required for any other format. Neither of the discs were by any means full, which meant that they were not fragmented and the continuation pointers were not in use, and only BASIC programs were involved. Lucky, wasn't I!. Recently, a friend had directory track corruption on two discs. On DIRing the first one the 12 programs listed in the normal way. The 13th came up with " 0" and the 14th with " (WmR .BAS 4424" - lots of spaces. Using the utility program DISCDET, I found program 13 on the disc, but not in the directory, located from T26 S1 to T27 part of S10. The length of the program = all T26 (256*18) + T27 (256*9) + 83 bytes on S10, total 6995 bytes. I then found a program with a length just over 6995 bytes and reduced it down to equal 6995. The fact that the resultant program will not RUN does not matter. This was saved down to a new formatted disc with the same title name of the lost program (if known, if not then make one up). I used a new disc because we all know the first program starts on T18 making is easy to find. using DISCDET I then printed out T20 S1 and T20 S3 for the directory and T18 S1 for load, length, and exec information. Then with the corrupted disc in D1 and a new disc in D2 I transferred the contents of T26 to T18 and the part of T27 to T19 using SREAD and SWRITE. I now had the missing program on a new disc but it did not appear in the directory. Using DISCDET again I edited this disc to read as the print out of the same length program in the following areas: T20 S1 (as a precaution), T20 S3 up to and including the 25th byte (this is the length of one directory entry). The title name/extension was now in the directory. Next I did the same with T18 S1, but this time only needed to alter the first 9 bytes, byte 9 ending \$AA (Don't alter anything beyond this point). The missing program loaded and ran, but now I had a disc with a recognised filename on T20 but not on the backup T16 and DIRing the disc still showed 175104 bytes free. Copying this program to another disc put these two points right. If you don't do this, the next program saved will overwrite it and there will be other complications. I kept all the paperwork and discs used until I was sure I had a working program. Trying to load the second faulty program on the same disc resulted in an ?FM ERROR. T20 S3 and T16 S3 bore the same obvious incorrect file title name. Before writing direct to the disc I tried the RENAME command. It did not work, but using UTIL, RENAME off the menu restored it. The eagle eyed will have spotted that "(WmR" is similar to "(.Wm" which is a printer's way of interpreting \$28, \$12, \$D7, \$ED which resides at the end of T20 S1. These last four bytes indicate the way the disc has been formatted, the above example translates as 40T 18S. How these similar bytes overwrote the directory is one of DOS's many mysteries, to me at least. Any ideas? The fault on the other disc was straight forward.. Trying to load a program resulted in ?FM ERROR. Examination of the directory tracks showed discrepancies in both:- T16 S1 U/S, S2 OK, S3 OK; T20 S1 OK, S2 OK, S3 U/S. By transferring, I made T20 sound, then transferred all T20 to T16. DISCDET, by Dave Riley, in my opinion is the best of its kind and appeared in Up-2-Date No. 12 - but do amend line 1340 to read THEN C=7, not THEN C-7 to save frustration!.

DRAGON BOOKS REVISITED. Eric Lee.

Enter the Dragon, by Colin Carter. Published in UK by Melbourne House. 1983. Original price circa 8.00. This book comprises 30 well printed pages of programme listings. All the ones I have typed in have worked, so I have no reason to suspect that the others will not do likewise. There are several categories, headed under:- General, Educational, Gambling, Maths, Arcade, Action, Extended application, and Strategy. The preface states that the programs are "all intended to stretch the imagination from simple programs to ones that stretch the limits of the computer". Conclusion: The programs are quite comprehensive for their time, with the advantage that, if typed in correctly, they work!. The book also invites you to submit programs for a future publication, but I feel that, ten years hence, this offer would not now be available!.

Diet Update

With the Nutrasweet brand sweetener, guaranteed only one calorie. Unfortunately, here we are with issue 98 and there is still a lack of material. Paul and I could always bore you to tears with pages of GradeWood trash, but I think you've suffered enough of that for this issue. My thanks, as always, to those who HAVE written stuff for us to use, but it is a very sorry state of affairs when we can't pull together more than nine pages of material to use every two months, so PLEASE, if you have a few spare moments, write an article for all of us. My video piece earlier only took about ten minutes to write (comments to the effect that it looked it are most welcome), so it needn't been an epic which consumes weeks of your time. Try it - you might like it!. If we're at issue 98, can issue 100 be far away? The answer is, of course, no, the big centenary looms up in front of us in April 1995. Many moons ago, when issue 50 was just around the corner, I seem to remember suggesting, in my then first stint as editor, that as a celebration we could print the 50th issue on Gold paper with little frilly bits on. A worthy suggestion which sadly got short shrift from Group HQ, but nevertheless 100 issues of Update is something to be proud of, for the amount of work that all of you contributors have put in for the Group over the years. It would be a shame if we couldn't manage a full issue when we reach the big 100, so why not write that article you know you've always been meaning to. We need it now! Opening our account for 1995 will be material from, subject to contract, Tony Shellard, Stephen Percival, Clive Scott, and possibly Daniel Hodson and Chris Jolly if I can do something with the assembly listings. Thanks for your contributions. Why didn't I use them this time? Simple. If I do that, we have nothing to use for the next issue, and seeing as how I get less than three whole pages of submissions every two months, some needs to be kept over to fill up each issue as far as possible. Don't like the situation? YOU can do something about it. Thinking once more about the National Lottery (remember: It Could Be You), I see that some of the money raised is going to the millennia celebrations. Just an idea, but maybe we could get them to give us some money for our centenary celebrations (millennia, centenary, virtually the same thing) which would enable us to afford the Gold pages which were refused for issue 50 on grounds of cost. Hmmm. Although, come to think of it, I don't see why we need another Lottery, when we already have a perfectly good one in the shape of H.M.Government. See you next year. Stephen.

The Costa Living

As you know, the Group is short of funds, which means that I can't give The Devoted Staff (well, Mike and Stephen anyway) even a "below the rate of inflation" type pay rise although come to think of it, 3.5% of nothing is still nothing anyway. However, following the example of Our Glorious Leaders I think I have found a way around this problem. Anyone wanting questions answered should send them to Mike or Stephen accompanied by a cheque for at least £2,000.00 they will then pass the cheque on to their banks and the questions to me, and I will then provide my usual answer ("damned if I know"), and YOU will have provided them with sufficient funds to ensure their continued enthusiasm!. Simple, no?. Oh well, I suppose it was too much to hope for, but it was worth a try OK, questions still free as usual, but it really isn't fair that a bunch of worthless Westminster Prats can get paid substantial bribes for doing sod all when Dedicated Hard Working Editors can't even get paid!. How about the occasional freebie weekend at the Paris Ritz?OK, OK, forget I asked!, but it's discrimination, and I refuse to do my shopping at Harrods in future. Sorry Mike, Sorry Stephen, I DID try, but it looks as though you'll have to put up with just the usual recycled Christmas card again this year. Tell you what, take an extra ten minutes off on Christmas day, and I wont stop it out of your next expenses claim how's that for generosity?!. Ebenezer Grade.

2 UP LABELS . . . Ken Grade.

Many database or mailing programs, at least, those written for the Dragon, have no facility for printing labels which are arranged two side by side, or two across, on the sheet. This isn't necessarily a problem - you can print the left hand ones first, turn the sheet round and then print the right hand ones. The software solution isn't too difficult, assuming you are dealing with a Basic program. There will be an array to store the information and this is used by a FOR...NEXT loop when the information is printed out. The loop can be changed to FOR I=1 TO N STEP 2, so that the left hand labels are printed with every other record, and the right hand labels are printed with I+1. However, software writers have differing methods of indexing arrays, and there is usually more than one item of data for each record. e.g. a mailing list would normally have five fields - name, and four lines for the address.

```
10 CLEAR 2000: DIM A$(200), FT$(10): 'Arrays for information and fields
20 INPUT "Number of records: "; N: INPUT "Number of fields: "; NF
30 PRINT "Input data: ": FOR I=1 TO N: K=(I-1)*NF: 'K is pointer to information
40 FOR J=1 TO NF: LINE INPUT A$(K+J): 'J is the field no. for the record
50 NEXT J, I
```

The printout uses the same loop and pointers with the modification STEP 2 and an addition to the pointer K to print the right hand labels:-

```
100 FOR I=1 TO N STEP 2: K=(I-1)*NF: FOR J=1 TO NF
110 PRINT £-2. " "; A$(K+J);: PRINT £-2, TAB(40); A$(K+J+NF): NEXT J
120 PRINT £-2, CHR$(10); CHR$(10): 'Line feeds to align next pair of labels
130 NEXT I
```

Adding NF (number of fields) to the pointer moves it down the list one record, which is an effective, if obvious, way of printing records side by side. The idea does have other uses, like accessing data files on disc. That's another story, another Update!

MORE BOOK REVIEWS by R.A.D.

EASY PROGRAMMING FOR THE DRAGON 32. by Ian Stewart and Robin Jones. Published by Shiva. £6.00. 121 pages.

A volume intended for newcomers to the Dragon scene, giving a simple but thorough introduction to Basic, covering all the topics which the beginner needs to know. No experience at all is assumed as it is so easy to understand. The aim is to get the reader to write programs from the very beginning, starting with short, easy ones and building up to fancier programs as knowledge improves. Most of the chapters include suggestions for projects which can be carried out to improve ability with answers given at the end of each chapter. These are roughly graded so that the level of difficulty involved keeps pace with the knowledge gained. To avoid the early confusions which arise when the beginner starts with the official Manual, this book takes care to be selective, to take time, and explain commands and their actions as well as some things not included in the Manual. There are plenty of demonstration programs to be typed in and run, with detailed explanations of how they work. These are intended to be interesting in their own right as well, while being short enough to type in easily, they include games, educational, graphics, music and ideas for the reader to use in programs. With some good advice and help on debugging it hopes to provide a good grasp of a large part of Basic and confidence to produce original programs.

We will be running a series of short reviews on Dragon related books in future issues. Although many of these publications are now out of print, most can still be obtained second-hand, either through Update ads or firms like P.S.E Software and R.Preston Software, now at a fraction of their original price.

IT COULD BE YOU?

I'm sure none of you will be spending money on lottery tickets, of course, but there's always a chance (several million to one, perhaps?) that some of you just MIGHT want to give it a try, in which case you'll need to select some numbers, right?. Now it may be traditional to use Auntie Ethel's birthday, the age of the goldfish, the combination of the firm's safe, and your Visa PIN number, but in these days of (fairly) High Technology why not go all computerised and let your old Dragon do the work for you? after all, you're always complaining that you don't know what to do with your computer, so why not let it try to win you a million or three?.

No, I am NOT suggesting that you shut your eyes and push the number keys at random Hopeful Fred Hopewell has written a short program to pick out half a dozen randomly selected numbers between 1 and 49 for you, and while he isn't guaranteeing that they will make you an instant millionaire (he's having trouble with the virtual reality routine to generate that silly finger shaped cloud that follows winners around), he HAS suggested that we offer the program to you, on disc, for a mere £2.00 inclusive, which just HAS to be a winning price if nothing else!. So, if you want to blame your lack of money on "computer error ... it picked the wrong numbers", or avoid all those begging letters when you win by telling everyone that "the Dragon won it, I didn't" (that way everyone will think you mean your Mother-in-Law), then just send a cheque for £2.00, made out to the NDUG (as usual), to Paul Grade, and there's an even chance that you'll get a disc containing Fred's program!. Of course, being a "God Cause", we'll be expecting a small donation towards Group funds if you DO manage to win a couple of million ... not a lot, 10% will do nicely!.

The Liverpool Show

I had intended to write something about Mike's Dragon Show, but under the circumstances I think that he has said all that can politely be said already and been a lot more restrained about it than I would have been. All I can add is that it was a damned good effort, and deserved a lot more support than it got. I would like to say "thank you" to those who DID bother to attend, and of course to Mike and everyone who helped out there. If anyone wants another Dragon Show I can only suggest that they try to organise one themselves ... and see what THEY think of the response they'll get!. Paul Grade.



Some of you expressed interest in the software we use for Update, and one or two have pointed out that errors could be reduced if we used a more modern w/p with a Spell Checker.

Actually, we DO have a perfectly good Spell Checker, and just to convince you of this she has consented to allow us to publish a picture of her busily at work on the current issue of Update1.

I think it only fair to warn you that she has assured me that anyone commenting unfavourably upon her appearance will be

turned into a frog ... so keep your comments to yourself or look for a nice French pond to live in!.

The Late, Late Bit

Yet another year gone by and the old Group is STILL running well, perhaps that's a slight exaggeration, "limping" might be a little more accurate, but either way we're still around, and it seems probable that I'll still be writing garbage like this at the end of 1995 ... provided not too many of you drop out in the near future, and that we manage to get enough material coming in to make up a reasonable size Update every couple of months. Surprising, isn't it? with all the alleged wonders of Pentium PCs, interactive CD, and the rest of the currently fashionable over-priced rubbish, the old Dragon still manages to survive Dragon Data did a far better job than they realised, and it's only a pity that their accountants weren't in the same class as their designers, or the great PC might have found itself pushed into a bad second place by this time!. Anyway, 'tis almost Christmas once again, with all the usual synthetic festivity, of course, but don't let it get you down ... when you're collapsing in front of the Traditional Central Heating Radiator, recovering from the indigestion caused by all that Traditional Non-Alcoholic Christmas Spirit, and that Traditional Christmas Dinner (provided by the local branch of Iceland and lovingly prepared in the microwave), cursing the kids, trying to invent a good excuse for being elsewhere before Auntie Ethel and Uncle George (the ones who gave you those fluorescent pink socks last year) turn up to bore you to homicide, and attempting to work out whether you'll be able to pay off this year's credit card bill before the January Sales double it, remember that Things Could Be Worse, (and probably will be!). Roll on next Christmas!.

1984 has been a notable year on the computer scene ... the year when nothing at all happened!. Yes, I did hear about the Great Information SuperHighway, but somehow I can't seem to believe in it ... I still get as many bad lines and wrong numbers now as I did back in the days when Post Office Telephones (remember them?) used that lovely Strowger relay switching and copper wire, so why should I get all excited about fibre optic cables, digital data transmission, and tone dialling? OK, I heard all about the benefits of Fax machines too, just fax your order and most firms will arrange for it to be delivered to the wrong address three weeks later ... but when I offer to fax them a sheet of fivers to pay for it they don't seem to want to know. E-mail? great, but who pays for the Compuserve subscription and all the "extra charges" that they never mention in the ads?, and more to the point, who pays my phone bill? ... post and ordinary phone calls are still cheaper and not all that much slower, so what's all the fuss about?. On the subject ... wouldn't you just LOVE to strangle all those precocious brats that Intel etc are using in their commercials? the ones happily playing with Daddy's new £5,000.00 multi-everything Pentium, and running up a phone bill like a Cabinet Minister's expense account?!. Why don't they ever show the scene where Daddy comes home and finds that Brat has happily wiped his entire month's work (of course, Daddy works from home ... doesn't everyone?) off the hard drive, and reformatted all his backup discs because there wasn't room on them for him to copy Brat Next Door's games?. OK, I know, too much violence on TV already but you have to admit that it would be more amusing AND realistic. And while we're on about commercials, you know the Renault ones where the driver always whips into a parking space with half an inch to spare at both ends of the car? why do they never show the NEXT scene, the one with the totally flat Renault with lorry tyre marks all along the roof, that had been parked without leaving enough space for the truck behind it to get out?. TV is so BORING! maybe I'll change my mind when they show a shot of Jeremy Beadle with his camera stuck up his rear elevation, or when a news reader announces that "There is no news today, so I'm going for a drink".

Oh well, I suppose I shouldn't expect too much how CAN you have too much?! ... but there's always a chance that some of you will win the odd million or three on the Great National Lottery Rip Off and decide to give half of it to a deserving cause like the National Dragon User Group Staff Pension Fund, but you wouldn't do that anyway, would you? you'd be too busy arranging to leave the country before H.M Inspector of Taxes managed to find a way to get most of it away from you on behalf of the Politicians Slush Fund (otherwise known as The Treasury). Still, it was a nice thought. See you next year. *Paul Grade.*

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UPDATE ! !

Just because you've got a full fourteen pages this time around that doesn't mean that we've plenty of Update material now!. Quite the reverse, actually, as you'll discover if you read through this issue carefully, most of it is Grade/Wood Waffle. Actually, Stephen had only enough material for NINE pages this time around (and that was including HIS "waffle efforts"), so I would suggest that you work off some of that Christmas overeating by exercising your Dragon's keyboard!. Paul Grade.

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING (ALMOST)

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