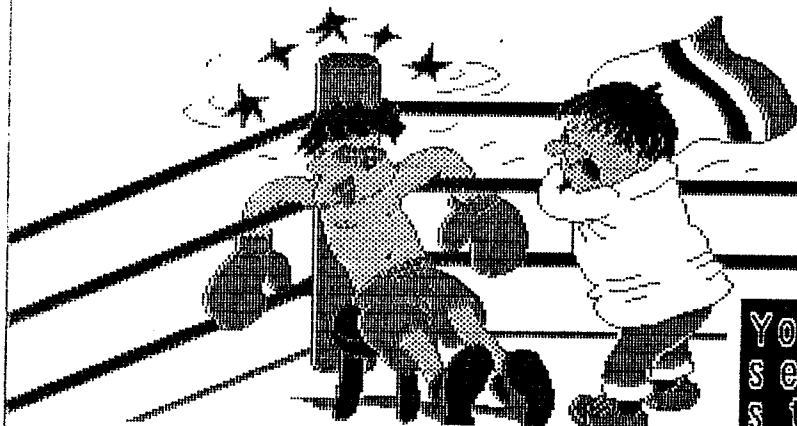


CAC

UNDERCOVER

Nov/Dec
1993
Issue 2
Only 80p



Elsewhere in this issue



Exclusive
interview
with Debby
Howard

Plus lots more

- VR - A report
- The survey is revealed
- Is your CPC PC compatible

You'll be
seeing
stars
with our
knockout
comps
inside



If it's out, it's in

"A lively and
interesting read"
-WACCI

Pacific
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All letters must be sent to the above address under the rule that any correspondence may be printed. However mark "NOT TO BE PUBLISHED" on your letter if you don't want it to be included.

We cannot guarantee to answer every letter sent but we will try.

Please make all cheques and postal orders payable to David Crookes.

Circulation 90054

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Nov / Dec

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what you think of us.

Everything's going well so far with a quite healthy circulation, lets hope it continues to rise.

So there isn't much left to say except enjoy the mag and the disc (if you sent one) and check out our special offer on the letters page.

David Crookes

Welcome

Welcome one and all to the second edition of CPC Undercover. In a packed programme, we have a special report on VR as well as an exclusive interview with Debby Howard. Who said the CPC wasn't PC compatible? We show otherwise elsewhere in this issue. And please fill in the survey on page 3 - we need to

Advertising Rates

Advertising rates in CPC Undercover are very cheap. We charge only 75p per quarter of a page, £1.50 for half a page and £3 for a full page. There are even sponsorship deals. You can sponsor a whole issue for £5 or just one column for £1.

Next Issue

- How to run and set up a fanzine
- A racing game round up
- **NEW** Superhints - a page of useful little tips
- And all the usual reviews, news, etc,

The CPC Undercover Awards and Survey 1993

The lights dim, the drums roll and celebrities fill the room. It's time for another back slapping award ceremony, but this time they have some sort of prestige. Put your hands together for the CPC Undercover Awards of 1993.

This is probably the first time there has been an award "ceremony" for the CPC which has been voted by the users. This is the ideal opportunity to separate the good from the bad and the bad from the downright ugly. Furthermore, it could act as a guide to shopping - a sort of extension to the Know Your Rights article in issue one.

The categories are straight forward so arm yourself with a pen and scribble in your nominations. When you've done that, send the page in to the address on page two. We'll sort them out and give a copy of Nigel Mansells World Championship (reviewed in this issue) to the first entry which is pulled out of our goldfish bowl.

Worst game of 93

Best PD game

Worst PD game

Best PD utility

Worst PD utility

Best commercial offering

Worst commercial offering

Best Football team

Worst football team

Best PD library

Worst PD library

Best Software house

Worst Software house

Most helpful person

Least helpful person

Best Mail Order Firm

Worst Mail Order Firm

Best Mag/Fanzine

Worst Mag/Fanzine

Best Game Of 93

Name _____
 Address _____

 Postcode _____
 Tel. Number _____

Please send the form to the address on page 2.

SURVEY

Please fill in the survey too.

1. What size should the mag be in? A4 or A5?

2. How many pages should CPCU have?

3. Is the price too much, too cheap or just right?

4. Are you satisfied with the coverdisc?

5. If not why?

6. Please state which you would like to see more of, less of, or keep the same:

- Editorial _____
- News _____
- Interviews _____
- Letters _____
- Publically Speaking _____
- Commercial Reviews _____
- Competitions _____
- Features _____
- Cheats _____
- Tutorials _____
- Hardware reviews _____

7. What (if anything) would you like to see included in CPCU?

8. Have you any other comments? _____

9. Would you ever think about writing for CPCU?

10. If yes, then what would like to write about? _____

11. Would you ever subscribe? _____

Thankyou for your time

Bits and Pieces

STS & Quantum

Quantum have announced a great new disc utility called Xexor. By their reckoning, it is "probably the most impressive piece of software ever written for the CPC." Are they correct? Well it seems so. With a sector editor, disk copier and an entire suite of disc utilities, it could well be literally disc-tastic

- AA seem to think so anyway. We'll have a review as soon as we get our hands on a copy (are you listening Quantum?)

Xexor aside (how is that pronounced? Answers on a postcard.), STS have got a hefty software list as well as some great services.

S-DOS

This is a disc operating system for 3.5" disc drive owners. It comes on ROM

only and costs £15. Again this is billed as the greatest DOS available.

Soundhacker

Want to hack music from games and demos? Then this is for you. Written by a professional hacker, Soundhacker sounds (excuse the pun) absolutely excellent. The price is unknown.



DTP fun

Powerpage 128, the long awaited DTP package has finally been released. Catch a review in this issue and realise how good it really is.

AA falls down

Amstrad Action, the last remaining newsstand magazine for the CPC, has announced a six thousand fall in circulation for the first half of this year.

For the readership, which once rose to 37,000, has dipped to a low of 21,000 compared with the latter half of 1992 which heralded a drop of 8,000 to 27,000.

Therefore a drop of 16,000 has occurred.

Microdesign =

The price of Microdesign + has been slashed to only £18 due to it's

forthcoming appearance on an Amstrad Action covertape. The price includes a manual and Microdesign+. For those who don't know what it is, it's one of the best commercial DTP packages you can buy. It used to retail for around £28. Contact Campersoft for more details.

Cheap Drives

CPC Now!, a fanzine-cum-CPC suppliers have acquired a stock of 3.5" disc drives which they are selling for the ridiculous price of £35. Give them a ring on 0353 663030 to find out more details.

Cheap Discs

WACCI, Britain's biggest user group, will soon be selling used 3" discs... for only 60p. This is the same price as 3.5" ones. They will contain a new label but will not contain a sleeve cover. Their address is on the Info page elsewhere in this issue.

Megablasters

More news on the game we mentioned last issue, Megablasters, which is being coded by Odiesoft, will be programmed in Overseas (the picture spilling into the border) and it will allow up to four players to play simultaneously. So watch out for this Dynablasters clone when it hits the PD libraries.

Are you stuck?

CPC Undercover have got hold of some cheap address labels. They are typewriter labels but do fit in all printers using the cut paper port (i.e. inserting a bit through the top). They are of a superb quality measuring 89mm x 36mm. To get 250 labels then send a cheque or postal order made payable to David Crookes, for £2.00 (including postage and packing) to the usual address.

Bits and Pieces

is sponsored by

PACIFIC SOFT

Softlok

STS strike gold again. Softlok is a tape to disc transfer program with an extensive database including games like Robocop. STS will even copy games individually for you.

You'll find them at 10 Lakin Drive, Barry, S. Wales. CF6 5AJ. (0446 746920).

What a great company.

A Seven Liner

This is a Multiface Screen Converter Program which I knocked up in a couple of minutes. It allows Multiface saved screens to be used in most art packages (Gpaint, AAS, etc).

10 MEMORY 16384,CAT
20 INPUT "Enter
Filename",file\$
30 LOAD file\$, &4000
40 PRINT "Insert
Destination Disc": CALL
&BB18
50 CALL 32768
60 SAVE file\$, b,
&C000, &4000
70 PRINT "Completed.."END

I was in two minds over putting it on the coverdisc because most of you aren't sending one in and I think that this program would benefit all Multiface owners, so, as you can see, I printed it instead.

Would you like to see more type-ins in CPU? If so write in and tell us your views.

Coverdisc No. 2

What a coverdisc we have this month. "The last one was great" did you all say? Pah, compared to this one, the previous disc was as bad as Michael Jackson's plastic surgery (if anything can be that bad).

Protex Demo

You may be thinking that a word processor demo is useless because if you can't save or print what's the use in using it? Well, there's a big reason for using it - somebody has come up with a save and print patch. This means it can do everything the normal Protex can but without the cost.

Run it and load in the file "README" in order to view the instructions. The print patch runs separately and so to use it you must exit from Protex into BASIC then run the file "PRINT". It's all fairly straight forward.

(N.B. Unfortunately, it has problems in saving ASCII files, in that it doesn't do it at all).



Catedit

Remember the review in the last issue (you did buy the last issue, didn't you?) on Catedit. Remember how I said it was really good and that it was a very professional? Remember me urging you to buy it? Remember no more because here it is. Instructions aren't necessary but I'll give you a tip: after each "visit" into Catedit, use the Save Changes option otherwise you'd discover that what you thought you had erased, is still sitting on the disc.

Puzznix

Shift a few blocks, match them up and watch them disappear. It provides mountains of fun doesn't it? Well it may sound rubbish but (cue a cliché) it is not.

Puzznic takes its gameplay directly from Puzznic, a game from Ocean, but enhances it bringing good quality graphics and startling gameplay. Tim Blackbond stated that, without a doubt, Puzznix is even better than the real thing so there is only one thing to say about it - go and buy it now - except you don't have to because it's here already.

The controls are easy - just use a joystick - and you have to match up shapes on various letters to make them disappear. This gives you points and what do points make? That's right they make you advance a level. Enjoy.

Clip Art

If you own a DTP package then here's a selection of clip art for you, taken from Presto PD. If there's enough demand for clip art, I'll try and put NEWS-LIB on the disc. NEWS-LIB is a library of around a hundred pieces of small clip art.

Useful Info

In our ever trying attempts to bring you, the reader, the best possible magazine, we are printing a complete list of all the addresses you are ever likely to need. However if we have missed someone out, write in and tell us.

PD Libraries

Sheepsoft
39 Woodlands Road
Barry
South Wales
CF6 6EF

Demon PD
47 Hilton Avenue
Birmingham
B28 0PE

GDPD
49 Woodville
Barnstaple
North Devon
EX31 2HL

Presto PD
58 Graiglywd Road
Cockett
Swansea
SA2 0XA

Hardware

Avatar
39 Crossfell Road
Leverstock Green
Hemel Hempstead
Herts
HP3 8RG
(0442 251705)

Dartsna
47 Kidd Place
Charlton
London
SE7 8HF
(081 317 1170)

SD Microsystems
PO Box 24
Holbeach
Lincolnshire

GUL Microform
191 Watling Street
Fulwood
Preston
PR2 4AE

Siren Software
Wilton House
Bury Road
Radcliffe
Manchester
M26 9UR
(061 724 7572)

Trojan Products
Unit 7
Dafen Industrial Estate
Llanelli
Duffedd
South Wales
SA148 LX
(0554 777993)

Campersoft
10 Macintosh Court
Wellpark
Glasgow
G31 2HW
()

Software

Pipeline Software
9 Brynglas Terrace
Pule
Bridgend
Mid Glamorgan
South Wales
CF33 6AG
(0656 740741)

Sentinel Software
41 Enmore Gardens
East Sheen
London
SW14 8RF

STS Software
10 Macintosh Court
Wellpark
London
G31 2HW

Trojan Products
(See hardware)

WACCI
12 Trafalgar Terrace
Long Eaton
Nottingham
NG10 1GP

Fanzines

Artificial Intelligence
19 Lee Street
Littletown
Liversedge
West Yorkshire
WF15 6DZ

WACCI
(See above)

CPC User
65 Wallisdon Avenue
Fareham
Hants
PO16 1HS



Disc Formats

Sheepsoft: 3" discs
and 3.5" discs
formatted as DATA
(or SYSTEM for CPM
programs)

Demon PD: 3" discs
and 3.5" discs
formatted to Rndos
4.

Presto PD: 3" discs
and 3.5" DATA
format and MS800 2
and 4.

Debby Howard

An interview
with the lady
of adventuring

In a new series of interviews, CPC Undercover will talk to those people who are making things happen CPC wise. We start the ball rolling with the lady of adventuring herself, Debby Howard.

Amstrad Action's adventuring "reporter" and ex - owner of Adventure PD eagerly toyed with her computer before announcing that she became involved in computers as soon as she bought herself a Commodore 64.

But it was with an Amstrad CPC that she made her claim to fame.

Debby introduced a first for the CPC - a PD library that catered solely for adventurers. This grew into a larger thing and she, armed with her vast knowledge of adventure games, began to branch out with Dragon Software. It offered maps and solutions to hundreds of games and sold them at very cheap prices so that everybody could at least make some progress with their purchase.

"I bought a CPC because my brother had one and I was just so impressed that I just had to have one myself," she said looking up from her keyboard.

By becoming one of the top "companies" she also dispelled the very untrue myth that computers are a male domain. In fact, she also picked up many awards for her

services including the coveted Honary Balrog award and one from Adventure Probe for being the best 8 - bit PD library for adventurers.

"Women do have a place in the computing world,"

she informs sternly. "I would inform anybody who challenged that by stating the fact that quite a few top computer people (in the adventuring world) are women. It is also well known that the female gender have a more lateral mind which is needed in computing."

However, a heavy workload has taken its toll and Debby Howard decided to close down the library on the 31st

September. All the adventures have been passes on to Adam Shade of Dartma PD. This doesn't mean that she will be deserting adventures for good, though, because she's back and currently writing for Amstrad Action, the main CPC magazine. This has enabled her to help out more people than ever as well as making her efforts that little more profitable.

Debby's fascination for adventures is immense. So

Debby's
Top 5

1. Heroes Of Karn
2. Warlord
3. Lords Of Time
4. Jewels Of Babylon
5. DAAM

much so, it seems as if she likes nothing else, but does she?

"Not really. The only other games I like to play now and again are strategy games like, for instance, Sim City and Pirates."



This seems to fit in with most women's preferences. Matt Gullam, owner of Presto

PD once wrote in his fanzine that fifty percent of the orders he took were from women and the vast majority wanted some sort of adventure game.

But there shouldn't be any discrimination at all as far as computers go.

"It doesn't matter what sex, age or colour you are when you are using a computer."

Win an adventure

To tie in neatly with our first ever interview, we are giving away five copies of the superb PD game, *Eve Of Shadows* on disc.

Just answer the following question: What is Debby's column in AA called? Closing date is 15th January.



Nigel Mansell

Price: £15
Softie: Gremlin
Options: Loads
Levels: 16 tracks
Notes: 2 disc sides

Now that Nige has turned his back on Formula One in favour of the more profitable Indy Car Racing, this game seems a bit out of date. But who cares? Certainly not David Crookes who jumps behind the wheel and waits for the flag to fall.

We've had loads of good driving games in the past - Continental Circus, Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge, Chase HQ, Powerdrift - the list is almost endless. Lo and behold here's another one - Nigel Mansell's World Championship to give it its full name. So what's new?

Well firstly the presentation is absolutely excellent. From start to finish there is a beautiful set of screens. It is all in mode one and the colours are very limited but even so the resolution more than makes up for that. But you don't want to hear about how well it looks yet, do you? You want to know about the gameplay.

The gameplay is out of this world. The player sits in the car so the view you have is the road ahead and the front two wheels. Just in front of the wheels is the steering wheel where your hands sit. The lights indicate you to start and you're off. Turning round a bend you notice your hands move the steering wheel and the wheels turn. This may not be spectacular but it adds to the game. You really do feel as if you are playing an

arcade game using a steering wheel.

The car moves very smoothly around the track and doesn't slow down when you meet other cars. There are sixteen tracks and you can play on any one of them for a one of game or you can opt to play a full season. There are passwords after every race so you can stop at any time, note down the password and continue the next day.

When you come in the top three you get a lovely drawn screen of you and the other two winners. However, the actual drawing is always the same with Nigel Mansell in first place. Even if you came second and Alan Prost came first, Nige would still stand in the same place - only the words move. It's hardly a major flaw, though.

The controls are easy, especially on joystick. There aren't any fancy moves, it's just straight

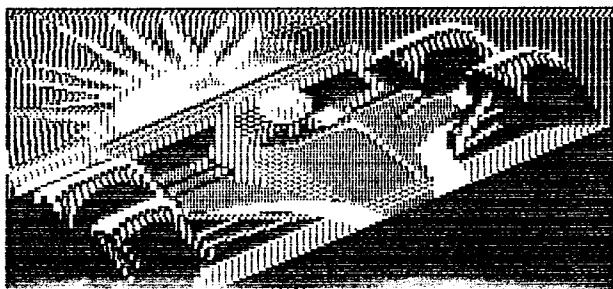
up to accelerate, down to brake and left and right to move left and right. This enhances the game play.

Overtaking is quite hard but not impossible. It is just that the track is a little too thin. On the other hand the game is quite easy to win which is one of its downfalls. However this increases staying power as does the fact that even if you came last in all the races you could still progress onto the next one unlike Continental Circus where you restart the game if you don't make the mark.

Overall the game is fun and extremely polished with good sound effects and graphics. You'll play this for ages.

Graphics: 95%
Sound :86%
Fun :99%

Overall :96%
Well worth buying.



Pipemania

Price: £3.99
Cassette
(Touchdown)
Overall: 85%

Quick Reviews

Barbarian Two

There are three levels in this game of which a certain game reviewer has never reached the second one. Judging by the instructions though the game seems the same throughout, that is kick and chop anything that moves. Boring, boring. You have five lives and quite a large array of moves but even though the graphics are amongst the best seen on the CPC, there isn't enough variety and therefore a mark of only 54% is warranted.

Hong Kong Phooey

Now this is more like it. Baron Von Bankjob has escaped from jail so it's up to you to capture him again. There are loads of obstacles such as thugs, collapsing platforms, elevators, switches and doors, oil and acid patches and falling debris to hinder your progress and give you an attainable challenge. The controls are simple and the graphics are, well, absolutely top notch for a budget game. Mr Phooey is instantly recognisable and the backgrounds are colourful and detailed. It's not the easiest of games, though, and the idea is the same throughout but for £3.99 it's a bargain. It's worth 81%.

We've had games about the Police, burglars, murderers, Technicians (Technician Ted) and racing drivers, but plumbers? Who would have thought it? Touchdown did as David Crookes found out.

It's certainly not a familiar concept. Not for Pipemania the killing and shooting as in most games. Not for Pipemania the exploring adventure games a la Dizzy. Not for Pipemania the thrill of racing around a track at a hundred and eighty miles a second. No, Pipemania is all about stopping the flooz from oozing out from the pipes.

So armed with a joystick, you don your favourite plumbers cap and give yourself an inch or so of bum cleavage before moving the bits of pipes around in order to form a continuous construction to prevent the flooz from spilling.

To the left of the screen is a dispenser which can hold five pieces of pipe. You can then place the lowest pipe piece onto the grid in any position you like. You will also find that you have to play ahead in other words you will have to see what pieces are coming up in order to gain the maximum amount of points.

If you have misplaced a piece and would really like to put another in its place then you can bomb the previously placed pipe section. However this holds a

penalty of fifty, yes fifty, points.

Each level has a target number of pipes to be set, exceed it and you'll be fine but failing to reach it means game over - there aren't any lives in this game. Luckily though, there are passwords every five levels or so.

As you progress the task will get harder. The flooz will begin to flow faster and there will be obstacles to work around as well as bonus and one way pieces.

A Tetris style bonus game is also included for added variation and if you get bored of playing on your own, then drag another person in and play the two player mode. The other person is not up to scratch? Well let him or her use the practice option for a while.

So what's the verdict? Well it's rather good. It's addictive and fun but it can and usually does get tedious after a while. However, Pipemania is a classic game with formidable graphics and sound but a blistering gameplay which will keep you amused for hours and hours. Puzzle games at their best.

Graphics:	50%
Sound	:34%
Fun	:89%



Has anybody got a game they would like to review themselves? If so send in the review as a Powerpage 128 file.

The Best Is Yet

The latest computer craze has hit Britain. VR (or Virtual Reality) is forecast to take over the whole computer industry as we know it. It may not be the bees knees yet, but the best is yet to come as David Crookes finds out.

It is the perfect answer to your dreams. Have you always fancied playing for England? Would you like to go back in time or get a glimpse of the future? How would you like to take part in the Tour de France? You would? Well Virtual Reality could make these and many other, dreams come true.

It comes in the form of a helmet and a pair of gloves. With the helmet in position, you are ready to tackle anything.

You are connected to a computer which displays the images you see inside the helmet. The gloves have small sensors on them so that you can "touch" things in the computer environment, giving you the feel of actually being there.

But already, the helmet is becoming out

of date and is being replaced by lightweight goggles.

However, the actual images seen inside the helmet or goggles is not exactly state of the art. In fact they are not unlike the Freespace games like Driller. It is this that sparks a downpoint in VR. On the other hand, the technology can only get better, so it won't be long before we see proper photographic images and what a revelation that would be.

Just picture it. Instead of merely sitting around watching television on wet, dreary, Sunday afternoons, you could pop into your bedroom and go on a bike race. You could hurtle down ski slopes at tremendous speeds or go on a tour of Paris, all without even leaving the house.

There could even be a time when nobody ever leaves the comfort of

their home because VR would do everything they need. If we ever let technology get this far, then could it hold absolutely disastrous results? Would some people opt for a life of superimposed images over normal life or even more frightening, would VR ever become normal life?

It's the year 2030. All is polluted outside. Car exhaust fumes, personal aircar (cars that fly) fire deposits and intense levels of Ozone radiation make planet earth a very dangerous place to roam about in.

You are inside your specially equipped personal VR centre - your only way of enjoying life - with your helmet on. Suddenly you've embarked on a tour of India as it was "in the olden days." You are now watching a football match as if you were there. Television has become a thing of the past but so unfortunately, has life.

Put it down to

A VR machine has just been installed in Manchester City Centre, so I decided to take a Metrolink tram into the centre to check it out so to speak.

The first thing I noticed was the price £1.50 for three minutes. Not bad, I suppose, when London charges £2.50.

Putting your head in a spin

A very worrying aspect of Virtual Reality which has surfaced quite recently, is that of possible side effects caused by the machines.

Edinburgh University researchers have claimed that using Virtual Reality machines can seriously damage your eyesight.

Apparantly, the brightness of VR machines is eighteen times more intense than

normal vision and because the image is very close to the eye, you end up inwardly focusing rather than outwardly.

Many claims have been made against Virtual Reality. Some have said they felt dizzy and got headaches, others say they were sick.

With a home VR set rumoured to cost only £350, we could end up with a colossal problem.

To Come!

imagination. Therefore anything is possible with VR and as the headline says so dramatically - the best is yet to come.

The Virtual Reality machine was the size of a telephone box. I had to stand in it and put a large helmet over my head so that the receptors were visible to my eyes. Then I was told to grab hold of the controller to my right and the game began.

The graphics were nothing to write home about I suppose. They were filled in wire frame graphics which didn't look totally realistic, but the action was all around me and I was totally submerged in the game, battling fiercely against anything that came up. Unfortunately, the actual gameplay was as dire as Count Duckula but the experience was, well different.

Everything was fine until the game finished and I took off my helmet. I felt as if I had just emerged from a dark tunnel because my eyes really did have to adjust themselves. And because the images in VR are quite disorientating to say the least, I had to regain my sense of balance. Don't forget, this was only after three minutes. Imagine what it would be like after an hour.

However you do get the feeling that once the graphics are enhanced vastly, there could be a totally new experience which would rival the likes of television and cinema.

If you get the chance, though, go for it. You

would almost certainly want to have another go.

can't afford it

But what if you can't afford to pay one pound fifty every time you want to play? Well you could wait for the home sets which are due out next Christmas or you buy one of the Freespace games like Driller and Castle Master. There is a tendency for these games to be not quite the same as hard-core VR, though. The answer is simple: buy two mini televisions and insert them inside a cornflake packet side by side. Cut out a hole for your head and then wire the lot up to your Amstrad. Then brag to your friends about having the latest VR technology.

Seriously though, there are other uses than just games. You could have a whole kitchen designed through VR and then take a walk around it to check if everything is in its place. Builders could use it to make sure the building they construct is safe enough and people could be taught to drive without using a car. In fact, the only limitation is the users

Competition

How would you like to win the compilation disc - Virtual Worlds which contains the superb Castle Master? If you would then just answer the simple question below. All the correct answers will be put into our goldfish bowl and on the 24th January, we will pick out a winner. What does VR stand for?





Publically Speaking

The column worth a thousand pennies



Publically Speaking is the name, reviewing PD is the game. Ahem! Welcome to the second PS column. This is the place to look for reviews of PD software and fanzines. So without futhur ado (Who wrote this crap? Me? Oh!) lets get on with it. If you have written any PD programs or own a PD library or fanzine then get in touch and we'll mention it and also review it. The address is on page two.

WACCI

What has thirty two A4 pages, a great friendly feel and wacky humour? WACCI has, of course.

Uncle Clive as he is known, is the editor of the biggest Amstrad fanzine. The actual magazine is filled with all manner of helpful hints, tutorials and reviews as well as a gingintic array of letters.

WACCI is geared more to the serious user but even so, it is far from boring. It is run as a user group with all the members pulling together to help each other out.

The benefits of being a member are plentiful with discounts on top software and hardware, a telephone helpline, a book library and a PD and Homebrew library.

Run by a committee, the group has many members who offer services to each other at lower prices. In fact CPC Undercover costs only 70p to WACCI subscribers.

So if you use the Amstrad for more serious work then get WACCI but if you are a harderned gamesplayer, then forget it. However, the magazine does have something to suit everybody and so we award it with the CPCU seal of approval. 90%

Crime

Continental time. Crown of BENG from Germany, has written this, a superb disc copier. From time to time you get something which shines above the rest and this is one of those times.

The loading screen is full of bad language but press space and you are presented with the main menu. Here you will discover that

you can copy from drive A to A, A to B, B to A or B to B, so this program covers all possibilities.



Once you have done this, you highlight the programs you want to copy by using the space bar; RETURN will copy them. Pressing "c" toggles between disc copying and file copying, "s" toggles the speed (lazy or wild), "T" selects the number of tracks you want (40, 41 and 42). Great value. 83%

Mettalla

Joe Moulding wrote this a while ago, releasing it into his Sleepwalker library. In doing so, he created a great little game.

Upon loading, you enter the game and the display draws itself out. Taking control of a robot you have to collect crystals while avoiding spikes which indicate instant death. However, the floor is slippery and once you push left you keep on going left until something stops you. If there isn't anything to stop you, you will continue going around the screen until you die.

It's a puzzle game and you have to collect the crystals in a certain order otherwise you'll be snookered. It's against the clock too so you'll have to hurry.

The game is virtually identical to the bonus screens in Ewik Snax but it is quite good fun. The first few levels are easy but they gradually get a little more difficult - not too difficult though.

Graphically it is pleasant but not great and there isn't a tune but it's still great. 67%





Powerpage 128

Robot PD's updated version of Powerpage 64 is here..at last

After about a years wait, Powerpage 128 in it's full and uncut version, finally arrived inside a large brown jiffy bag. Into the disc drive it went and it began to load.

One thing which is certainly noticeable is the old command line at the bottom of the screen. It has been retained. However click on one of the options and you'll discover the difference. The program now boasts little pop up menus which do almost everything you need.

One thing sadly missing from the original was a copy function. To move

something around the screen you had to turn it into a piece of clip art, erase it and then import it into your preferred spot - hardly convenient. But now, there's a very handy copy option staring from beneath the block menu.

All the old features are still present so you can still reverse and flip and create your own clip art. The text editor is the same too as is the fill routine. Sorry? The fill routine is different? Ah, yes. You can now choose between a variety of different patterns ranging from the standard black blob to a brick effect. This, again enhances the program.

Printing has improved

too because you now have a choice of print quality from a scale of 1 to 8 and you can print out in A4 or A5, although the A4 copy is no where near as good as the A5 copy.

The preview option lets you preview your page before you print it out and it gives a handy reference guide to the settings you have chosen and even handier are keypresses like [CONTROL] and T to move to the top.

Good points aside though, Powerpage seems to have a tendency to crash when using the text routine but for 20p, who can complain? 92%

Power Tetris

Continuing the power theme, here's Power Tetris, a Tetris clone written by A. Strojczek and imported by Robot PD.

Tetris games on the CPC seem to have created a whole new sub-game of themselves - that is, to count the amount of copies around. There's AA Tetris which is a type-in from Amstrad Action, Drehdriss, a Polish game, Tetris and now this Power Tetris.

Put up your hand if you are fed up of seeing Tetris clones? After all there isn't much variety between them, is there? Oh well at least we can get our versions for pennies rather than pounds, unlike the pitiful Gameboy owners

who have to fork out around twenty five pounds for a mono version.

So to the review. What makes this game different from the rest? It has a two player option. Drehdriss does as well, does it? Fine. But does it have a four player option like this very clone does? Thought not. You see, by linking up your Amstrad to another in a similar fashion to the Gameboy version, you can play with three others for the ultimate gaming experience.



Obviously, you can play on your own if you don't have any friends but the two player mode is a little bit different from normal because when you complete a line instead of it just disappearing forever, it reappears on player two's grid making the game vastly more competitive.

Other than all this the game is the same as all the others out there but with superior graphics and sound and a very smooth movement. 85%

PC compatibility?

The CPC surely isn't compatible with a PC is it? Well, in a way it is. But how? Read on and find out as David Crookes takes you round the possibilities.

Obviously you can't take a game or serious utility straight from the PC and expect it to work. This is due to the differences of each machine. Each computer has its own processor and chips and to make one computer like an Amiga, compatible with say a Spectrum would entail a complete reworking of the electronics in one of them.

The CPC isn't as powerful a machine as a PC and neither would you expect it to be. PC's cost anything like a thousand pounds - a far cry from the Amstrads price tag of four hundred pounds. As such you couldn't as I've mentioned take a package such as Windows and make it work. However although direct compatibility is out you can get certain things to work on each computer.

You're at work or college and you use the company's PC's. You find that the work you are expected to finish by the morning is taking a little longer than expected (you really shouldn't go to the Pub all that often, you know). So what

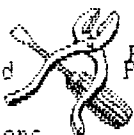
are you going to do? Well this is where your CPC could come in handy. Save the file you are working on as an ASCII one. It is best to do this in smallish chunks because CPC wordprocessors don't really allow work that spans over a hundred pages. Once this is done



you can then take it home and finish it on your Amstrad. Hold on! The disc you have just saved it on is a 3.5" disc. No matter how hard you try, you will not get that into your three inch disc drive. So you go out and buy a 3.5" disc drive only to find you get read errors. This is because the disc you are using is formatted to a PC format. Luckily, there are several programs out there which will let you use PC formatted discs on your CPC. 2 in 1, 22Disc and MFU would do the trick. Problem solved. PC compatibility problems were cured with only a three and a half inch disc drive and a bit of software. It only cost around eighty pounds too - much cheaper than buying a PC.

A clip round the ear

So we've solved word processing software problems but now lets turn our attentions on clip art. Using Microdesign 2 from Campersoft, you can import any Clip Art you see on the PC. It really is a great feature and one which opens up another path and another compatibility



problem solved. Why would you want to use PC clip art if there are so many pieces for the CPC? Well why indeed. Having a greater choice is not a bad thing, is it?

Amiga CPC 6128?

You stare at the graphics on the Amiga in awe. How you wish you could use the pictures on your CPC. Well with a three and a half inch disc drive and IFFcon, a great FD program, you can. Using pictures from the Amiga which are saved as IFF files you can convert them so that your computer can understand them. Using MJC's SUPPLIES Colourdump 3 program (available from OJ Software - see AA for ad) you can print them out in full colour.

What about PCW's then?

Microdesign 2 and Microdesign+ both let you import PCW clip art AND they let you save your DTP pages for use in the PCW version. So if you have a PCW with a printer then you could create your page on the Amstrad and print it out on the PCW. Or what about giving a copy of your page to a CPC owning friend on disc.

A FD program called ReadPCW allows CPC's to read PCW discs. It's worth getting. Matt Gullam (of Presto fame) spotted a PCW version of a word

processor called New Word. Apparently it is very good and he picked it up at an All Formats Computer Fair for a fiver - it normally costs £70. It wouldn't work however until, that is, he transferred the files using the PD program. Once he had done that, he got a PCW piece of software working on his CPC. What's more, he saved £65 on the original price.

Taking notes.....

The Amstrad notebooks are quite similar to the normal CPC's in that they both use Protext type software and a similar BASIC programming language.

What makes them even more worthwhile is the fact that you can interface a notepad to a CPC using only a RS232 which costs around £50. Siren Software have large stocks of these.

Compatible? You bet!

So anybody who tells you that you can't use software from other computers is telling a fib. As we have shown, the CPC can use software created for other computers - all that is needed is a bit of software (or hardware in the case of the notebook). The even better news is that most of the software is PD so becoming compatible is definitely not an expensive business.

Where?

All the software mentioned can be found in PD libraries and in adverts in AA.

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WANTED!

Good programs written by you. Yes, you. If you have written anything which you feel could make you money, then read on.



Pacific Software are a new company set up to give people the chance to write programs for profit. To keep the CPC alive we are offering programmers 50% of the total profits. That's right 50% - the rest is spent on advertising and copying your software in a highly efficient way.

Every program will be considered so send in your work on a 3" disk, including an SAE and instructions to Pacific Soft, 37 Trimmingham Drive, Brantlesholme, Bury, Greater Manchester, BL8 1W. Your disc will be evaluated and returned within the week. Don't forget, we will consider anything from games to serious software to adventures so get writing and get sending.

DTP: A rough guide

Part Two

Following on from the last issue where we talked about layout, clip art, lines and boxes, the rough guide takes us through columns, leading and autoflow. Who better to take you by the hand and guide you through the process of Desk Top Publishing than our very own, David Crookes?

You should know what DTP is by now because it was covered in the last issue (What? You didn't get the last issue? Shame on you!). Well, put simply a DTP package will allow you to place text and graphics on the same page so that you can create anything from newsletters to full magazines. In fact the only limitation of its use is your imagination. Most things can be created via DTP. Cassette Inlays? Easy. Posters? No problem. High resolution, labeled drawings? Simple.

Anyway, lets get back to the tutorial.

Alignment

Alignment is vital to a magazine or anything come to think of it, which has columns. Take a look at the pages in magazines and you will see that the writing in the columns are all on the same lines. In other words you don't have the effect below: An example An example of incorrect of correct alignment alignment

Notice how the second column is slightly out of line with the first one. Even though the difference is very small the result is very much noticeable, specially if you have large columns

prepared like this. If you are not careful your publication would become quite amateurish which is certainly what you don't want. So take a little bit of time getting the lines to match.

Nelson's Column

Great debates over columns can arise. You see, the burning question is: should you have two columns, in an A5 magazine, or three. You can see CPC Undercover's view on this. The reason we use three columns is so that we have more scope for design. Take the black box above as an example. It would surely look out of place in a two column magazine, wouldn't it? Granted, a two column mag is slightly easier to read but we still think that design should also be considered - it's basically all down to personal taste.

As far as A4 pages go, three is absolutely perfect - even four columns look pleasant. However don't go overboard (as if you would) and have seven or eight columns, especially if you are using the Amstrad - the resolution isn't high enough.

There seems to be many golden rules of DTP including one for columns, that being to try to make them all of equal size. In other words, your three

or so shouldn't consist of one enormous one spreading to Sydney, together with two tiny affairs of a couple of millimetres. There is one extremely simple explanation for this - your printer would not fit paper which meets this specification. How ever hard you try, you could not get your print head around a piece of paper of this size - it's sad but unfortunately true.

Finally on the subject of columns, you must include guidelines so that your writing will form itself into them. These are lines which run from the top of the page to the bottom. Don't forget to erase them before you print the page out, though.

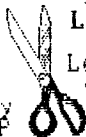
Go with the flow

Autoflow is a nice little extra which is present in most DTP packages. What this does is let your text flow around your pictures, giving a nice effect. This is illustrated below with the picture of the scissors.

Autoflow is not difficult to achieve - you just turn it on within the package and the software will do the rest.

Lead the way

Leading is the name given to the white spaces in between the lines. The amount of space can be set within a package. It doesn't matter how much space you have, though, as long as it



A guide to making clip art

If you haven't seen a piece of clip art worth getting then draw it yourself. Grab yourself an art package (gpaint will do) and knock up a picture. Save it (make sure it is in mode 2) then load up Powerpage. The next step is to click on

the FILE option and highlight LOAD SCREEN. Type in your file name and the screen will load. Fine so far?

This is the fun bit. Put a box around the area you want to be a clip art file then select **B L O C K** b e f o r e



highlighting CUT. Nearly there now. Type in the name of the clip art, press return and hey presto, a new piece of clip. Now that wasn't hard, was it?

Multiface users can convert game screens to clip art. Just convert the screen to a .SCR file.

readable and within reason (i.e. you don't end up with only 2 sentences per page).

Justification

Justification is the name given to the format of the text on a page. You can have text justified left, right and centre as well as a full justification. Again it all depends on what you want and what suits your application best. A magazine uses either full or left justification. Notices may favour central justification. Take a look at the examples below and make up your own mind on what format will suit your needs best.

Full justification

Justification depends on what you are using a DTP package for. Fanzines use full or left, notices sometimes use central.

Left justification

Justification depends on what you are using a DTP package for. Fanzines use full or left, notices sometimes use central.

Right justification

Justification depends on what you are using a DTP package for.

Fanzines use full or left, notices sometimes use central.

Centre justification

Justification depends on what you are using a DTP package for. Fanzines use full or left, notices sometimes use central.

Making the headlines

Headlines may seem quite straightforward but some of you may want some guidance to points such as size.

If you want to make an impression then go ahead and use the target font size available but remember that the resolution of the CPC is not very high and so a large headline is going to be very blocky. The main headline (DTP; A Rough Guide) is a two by two font and you can see that blockiness is forming. The above headline font is one by one and although it isn't too bad, it isn't very smooth.

Having said that it isn't too bad - just be careful when using larger fonts otherwise your output may not look as good as it should.

While we are on the subject of font size, the main text font should be smaller than the headline font.

So going back to our little guidelines which have been used through out the series, fanzines are best with two by two and one by one headline fonts (although a few of CPCU's are three by three) and the body font should be ideally one by one. Posters can really go the whole hog in terms of size - it depends on what the poster is aiming at. Cassette inlays again it depends but say about two by two for the headline and one by one for the text font.

Next issue

The guides have all been set now and there isn't anything left to say. We'll take a look at producing a fanzine, though, and the coverdisc will contain a few pieces of clip art. In the meantime take a look at the Powerpage 128 review in this issue and keep producing top quality items.

Last issue

It was stated that Mr Jones was running a digitising service for CPC owners under the name, Scantek. He has since pulled the plug on it which is quite a blow as it seemed to be a good service.



Sounding Off

Write to the usual address with your views and problems!!

A nice man writes

Dear David,

I was very happy with the first issue of CPCU - so much so I have enclosed a cheque for £6 so please send me the next six issues free of charge (Oh, alright then - Ed).

The DIP tutorial was brilliant and just right for complete beginners like me. My brother who uses DIP programmes at college also liked it and found it useful.

As for the Know Your Rights bit, well what can I say? It gave me all the information that I needed - the mag was worth buying just for that reason alone.

Your mag is great, unlike Presto News. Happy is not a word (yes it is - ed) that I would use when reading Gullam's creation.

The photocopying was crap and the content rubbish, I'm just glad it has gone for good aren't you?

Keep on bringing out good fanzines though - they are bloody superb. Tony Hewson
Liverpool

Thanks for the kind words on the magazine, Tony, but I think you was a bit harsh on Presto News. Matt's 'creation' as you put it was very well put together despite the rubbish photocopying. You may not be aware of it, but Presto News is no more and was changed to a disc fanzine called Grace

Under Pressure. I haven't seen a copy so I can't tell you much about it.

I'm glad you liked the DIP tutorial - part two is in this issue.

Get Serious

Dear David,

Great mag. What more can I say? Just a small query, though, where can I get Serious Disc 6 which you reviewed in the last issue? You didn't mention it.

Joseph Catterall
Kings Lynn

Serious disc 6? It's from Presto PD and the address is in this issue somewhere. I'm sure I mentioned it... Ah, yes here it is on the page before the review "a review of Presto's Serious Disc Six" it says. Anyway all the best down there in Kings Lynn.

Software Blues

I bought a copy of your fanzine last month and am pleased with my purchase. I was wondering whether you could tell me a bit about yourself (Why? -Ed). This is because (Oh, look an explanation - Ed) I like to be nosy. (Is that it? - Ed).

Now to the main part of my letter. Where has all the worthwhile software gone? I have been looking for some good quality software for ages and can't find any - any chance of reviewing some? And don't bother with music proggy because they're crap.

Mr/Mrs can't read the writing
Newcastle

Right, first things first. You want to know more about me then? Well, I'm David Crookes and I come from a small Northern town called Bury. I support Man, United (the Champs) and I finished my GCSE's, getting a, nine straight A's. I am currently at college. Reviewing commercial software is done in this issue but you do have to note that I simply cannot afford to buy all the new software that becomes available - we're only a small mag you know - so if anybody out there has written anything which they would like us to review for them, or if anybody has bought anything which they would like to review themselves, then by all means send them in. All articles published will earn the writer a free copy of the magazine plus a certain amount of fame. How does that sound?

All that she wants

Could you send me the next issue free because I liked it so much the last time round that I bought thousands and so don't have enough money left. Also do you have any blank discs you could send me as I have ran out? Thanks.
Alison Winter
Northants

A free copy of the fanzine will be winging its way to you at this

very moment. However, if the sellotape which I used to attach the fanzine to the pigeons leg comes unstuck then I'm sorry but I can't afford to send out another. It looks as if you'll have to buy issue two, doesn't it. As for the blank discs, I've run out too. Try WACCI for a new batch though because they've got stocks of discs for only £6 for ten.

Wot no Powerpage?

Dear Mr. Crookes, I have been trying for months, ever since the program was first mentioned, to obtain a copy of Powerpage 128.

Many PD houses I have sent SAE's to have not even answered and in desperation I contacted a WACCI club member who mentioned that he had the 128 version. It arrived this morning and to my horror turned out to be the 464 version which I already have.

Although you do not mention a PD version in the mag, can you sell me a copy of Powerpage the 128 version? If so please let me know whether you want a blank disc from me with an SAE or I could send the money for a disc to you.

Hopefully yours,
A. Sheldon
Nottingham

I have got the Powerpage 128 version. If you send a £10 note, I'll send you a copy. Seriously, though, send a disc and an SAE and I'll copy it for you free of charge. How does sound? Oh, and to everyone else out there please send a

SAE with every CPC Undercover order. I had a lot of orders without a SAE and it meant I was making a loss.

A General Plea

Dear Readers,
As you can see, this magazine is written by one man (i.e. me). Now this means the magazine can't be as flexible as it should because I can only write about what I know (which, lets face it, isn't a lot).

So once again I make this plea to all budding journalists et al. If you have anything interesting to write about, if you have a substantial knowledge of a CPC utility or whatever, then please get in touch.

Everything I receive will be considered. I really need somebody to review serious software and games so if anybody owns something along those lines then if you could spare an hour of your time (because that is all it would take) reviewing it then I would be very grateful. The magazine also needs a new tutorial as the DTP one is coming to a close - any offers? How about writing a letter to comment on something CPC related or write a feature on an aspect of computing?

The bottom line is, I

need help in filling the magazine. I don't want it to fold and I hope you don't either. Each and every person who has an article published in CPC Undercover will earn a free copy of the magazine and a disc full of PD plus a 10% discount on any of our special offers like the one below.

This is an ideal opportunity for those wishing to become a journalist to gain a bit of experience. Even those who don't want to be a journo can get a great deal of satisfaction in seeing their work in print, so please send in an article as a Powerpage 128 file. If you haven't got Powerpage 128 send a disc and I'll copy it for you otherwise send an ASCII file.

All the best
David Crookes
Bury

Thanks David (that name sounds familiar). So come on all you budding journos - here's your chance to make a name for yourself.

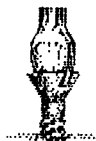
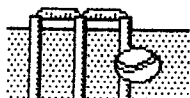


Writing for CPCU need not be hard work. Why not try it?

The Office Disc

A few people have asked about the best wordprocessors databases etc. Comments ranged from "where can I get them from" and "how much do they cost". Well I use the Protex demo; Rambase 3, PD Planner, an American label printer, Gpaint and Catedit as well as a few utilities such as Crime and Crunch. All these sit on one disc which I have now decided to sell. Every title is PD and can be passed around freely so I don't want to make any profit. Therefore I will only charge £2.20 which includes p&p as well as the disc. Cheques payable to David Crookes.

Clip Art Mania



Clip Art Mania